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By Ryan Quint

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By Ludwig H. Dyck

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By Kelly Bell

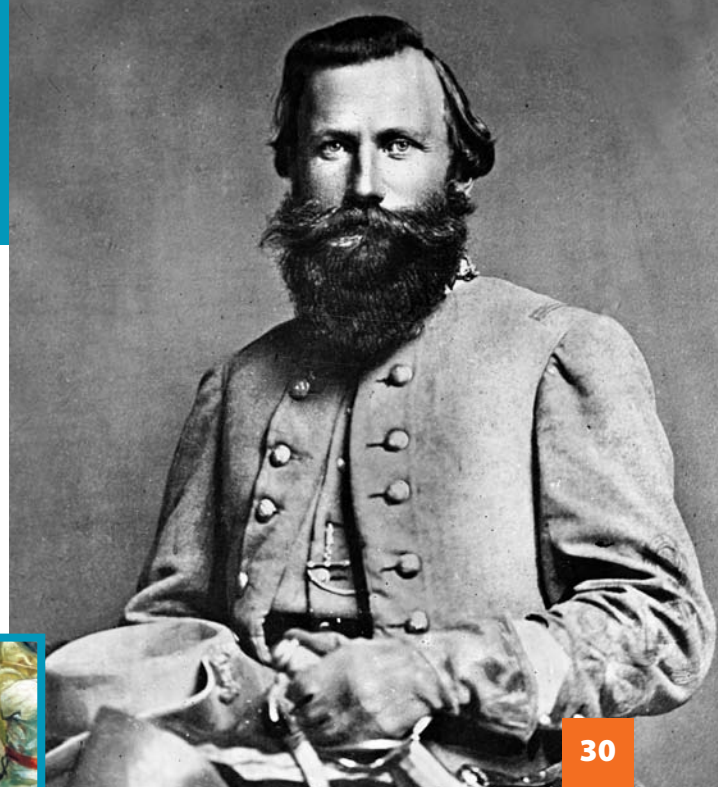
U.S. Army Rangers make their second combat jump in history during U.N. efforts in Korea to cut off retreating Communist forces in the Spring of 1951.

80 THE BRITISH EMPIRE RETURNS TO SUDAN

By Kevin Morrow

In 1898, Field Marshal Herbert Kitchener led an Anglo-Egyptian army against 15,000 Mahdist rebels at the Battle of Atbara along the Nile River in Sudan.

COVER: Pointing his M-16 in the direction of incoming enemy fire, squad leader Richard Champion, 11th Light Infantry Brigade, shouts commands to his squad while on patrol in Vietnam.. See story page 8. PHOTO: National Archives.



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Attack and defend, the classic quandary

In the title role of the film classic *Patton*, actor George C. Scott utters words to the effect that fixed fortifications are monuments to the stupidity of man. The German Siegfried Line was overgrown and cows purportedly grazed among its pillboxes and tank traps. By the time the eastward-advancing Allies reached the German fortifications, they did indeed offer little resistance.

The previous spring, the most ambitious land, sea, and air campaign in military history had been undertaken—initially against another series of seemingly impregnable Nazi strongpoints. This was Hitler's Atlantic Wall, constructed by German workers and slave labor over a period of years. Its purpose was to make "Fortress Europe," the fruits of Nazi conquest, safe from any invasion.

History recounts the events of June 6, 1944, and the weeks that followed, as a great triumph for the Allies. As a matter of fact, the Atlantic Wall, which stretched hundreds of miles from the Spanish frontier to Norway, was breached at several points—all in a single day!

Outflanked by military maneuver, out-fought by a concentration of forces at a single location, bombed, shelled, and smothered by attackers, the fixed fortification may well have become an anachronism with the advent of modern, mobile warfare in the 20th century.

Although their failures are perhaps better known, static defenses did have their moments during World War II. The Germans exacted a heavy toll in casualties and equipment while repulsing Canadian troops and a small contingent of U.S. Army Rangers during Operation Jubilee, a raid against the French coastal town of Dieppe in 1942.

In the rugged mountains of Italy, German troops took full advantage of the terrain and stalemated the Allied advance up the "Boot" on several occasions. The most savagely contested defensive stands were made at the Gustav Line between Naples and Rome and the Winter Line above the course of the Arno River in the north.

It was the ill-fated Operation Shingle, the Allied landing at Anzio, that was intended to outflank the Gustav Line and capture Rome, that proved to be one of the costliest maneuvers of World War II. Instead of advancing rapidly on Rome, the attack lost momentum and casualties mounted during months of bitter fighting. Eventually evacuated, the Gustav Line did prove its worth.

In the balance, though, fixed fortifications have been less than successful. The Maginot Line, for example, was a marvel of modern technology, capable of sustaining its garrison for lengthy periods without resupply. For a variety of reasons, however, its French fathers left the back door open through Belgium and the Ardennes Forest. When German troops seized the initiative and attacked on May 10, 1940, several of the Maginot strongpoints were defended bravely, but the majority of the attackers avoided direct assault and outflanked the defensive line.

The German assault on the Belgian fortress of Eben Emael was a testament to the capabilities of a small, highly motivated and well-trained force. In a truly remarkable feat, glider troops subdued Eben Emael with superb planning and execution, as well as the employment of potent hollow charge explosives.

Japanese defenders and Korean laborers had hardened the Pacific island of Tarawa into a menacing adversary bristling with pillboxes, bunkers, machine-gun nests, and artillery emplacements. It took point-blank fire from American tanks, satchel charges placed by intrepid Marines, and fire from flamethrowers to root out the entrenched enemy.

At best, fixed fortifications were able to forestall the inevitable. At their worst, they proved to be of little or no real value. While they may have become somewhat obsolete by World War II, the bravery and élan with which these fixed fortifications were captured remain valuable commodities today.

—Michael E. Haskew

National Archives



U.S. troops pass through a maze of antitank "dragon's teeth" in the Siegfried Line in September 1944.

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Both/National Archives

Plagued by controversy and institutional bias, the M-16 became the longest serving rifle in U.S. military history.

By Mark Carlson

Marine Private Jim McGarrah arrived at Phu Bai in South Vietnam in late 1967 and was sent to what was euphemistically called “The Rockpile,” a firebase that overlooked the Demilitarized Zone between South and North Vietnam. Before boarding a truck to the firebase, McGarrah was issued boots, helmet, flak jacket and other essentials by a grinning supply sergeant. The rifle he was given was a new Colt M-16A1, what the military brass were calling the “Miracle Rifle.” McGarrah and the other new “F—in’ New Guys,” (FNGs) were about to enter combat with the lightweight and fast-firing 5.56mm assault rifle. While he initially felt “invincible” with the M-16, McGarrah was soon to learn he had been given a weapon that was already proving to be unreliable in the jungles and highlands of Vietnam.

On his first day at the Rockpile he was on a makeshift firing range to get familiar with the M-16. Aiming at a destroyed jeep, he pulled the trigger. The sharp report of the high-powered round was satisfying, and the faint “twang” of the butt-mounted spring absorbed the recoil. Then he pulled the trigger again. Nothing. Another pull. Still nothing. He cycled the bolt and the spent round ejected and a fresh one was seated. But the gun refused to fire. This was a very disturbing sign for the new Marine rifleman. While McGarrah survived many firefights before being wounded in 1968 and sent



ABOVE: This July 1969 M-16 rifle maintenance guide was designed and illustrated by the legendary cartoonist Will Eisner for the Army’s *PS: The Preventive Maintenance Monthly* comics magazine. **TOP:** A 101st Airborne trooper responds to sniper fire while securing a mountain top landing zone northeast of Saigon, September 1967.



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ABOVE: His M-16 at the ready, SP4 Richard Champion, squad leader in the 11th Light Infantry Brigade shouts orders under fire during a patrol southeast of Chu Lai in January 1971. **BELOW:** A vintage Colt M-16 rifle. The Colt Model 602, internally designated by Colt as the M-16, was the first derivative of the ArmaLite AR-15 adopted by the U.S. military. The weapon would ultimately go through four generations, with several derivatives, including the shorter M4 “carbine” version.

home, he lived in constant fear of having his weapon fail him at the worst possible moment. He had good reason to think so and it was a common fear of the men who had been issued the M-16.

Scores, perhaps hundreds, of other soldiers, both Army and Marines, paid the ulti-

American soldiers served in combat in Vietnam. One can argue that they should never have been sent there, but no one would argue that, once committed to battle, they should have been given inferior equipment. Yet that is what happened.



mate price for being given a weapon they believed was virtually useless in combat.

In the June 1981 issue of *Atlantic Monthly*, James Fallows outlined what was largely unknown to the American public, “The machinations surrounding the Army’s adoption of the M-16 were a pure portrayal of the banality of evil. Between 1965 and 1969, more than a million

During those years, in which more than 40,000 American soldiers were killed by hostile fire and more than 250,000 wounded, American troops in Vietnam were equipped with a rifle that their superiors knew would fail when put to the test.” According to Fallows, the “Ordnance Corps was an insular and overly traditional organization reluctant to accept new concepts or ideas that contrasted with their own blinkered concepts in weapon design.”

The story of the M-16 is one of destructive chicanery and prejudice in the highest levels of the U.S. Army’s bureaucracy bent on sabotaging the weapon. In fact, the development of the M-16 was the subject of later congressional hearings that criticized the Army’s management of the program and uncovered evidence of “near-criminal negligence,” but no prosecutions were initiated.

During World War II, the German arms designer Hugo Schmeisser developed a new concept in infantry weapons, the *Sturmgewehr* or Assault Rifle. The STG-44 was a revolution in weaponry—rapid fire like a submachine gun but with the high power and range of a shoulder rifle. The use of a redesigned .30 caliber bullet with a smaller powder charge made the new weapon deadly in the hands of German ground troops. Made largely of stamped metal fittings rather than machined parts, it was possible for the gun to be manufactured quickly and sent to the troops fighting on the Eastern Front by late 1943. By most accounts, the weapon was developed in secret, both from Allies and Adolf Hitler. The Führer did not want the infantry to carry anything but the standard bolt-action Mauser rifle, the mainstay of the Wehrmacht, or the short but deadly Schmeisser MP-40 Machine Pistol. But when the troops fighting in the East began raving about the effectiveness of the new weapon, Hitler soon thought it was the greatest thing ever invented. The story probably has some apocryphal elements, but is essentially true.

When the war ended, so the story goes, a Soviet Red Army enlisted man, Mikhail Kalashnikov, copied the concept of the STG-44 and used it as a model to create the most ubiquitous assault rifle in history. The gun used by armies, revolutionaries and terrorists across the globe, the distinctive

Kalashnikov AK-47. More than a hundred million AK-47s have been manufactured since 1947.

There is no doubt the Soviet military embraced the new AK-47 assault rifle from the outset. But in the United States, there is a disturbing parallel between the Fuehrer’s initial resistance to the STG-44 Assault Rifle and that of the U. S. Army’s opinion of the ArmaLite AR-15, which would become the M-16. While Hitler’s original objection to assault rifles was based on a lack of understanding of its capabilities, the U.S. Army’s effort to keep the M-16 out of the nation’s arsenal is

believed by some observers to have resulted in the needless deaths of scores of soldiers fighting in Southeast Asia in the mid-1960s.

The reason was the Army's adamant belief that the fully automatic M-14, modified from the sturdy and beloved M-1 Garand semiautomatic rifle, was the best and only choice for the infantry of the future. And that belief was so strong that the Army not only refused to accept a superior weapon, but many observers felt it went out of its way to sabotage it.

The M-14 was initially born as the T-25, designed by Earl Harvey of Springfield Armory in 1945. After several refinements and improvements, the rifle, which used a powerful .30 caliber round, later adopted as the NATO 7.62mm bul-

National Archives



let, the final T-44 was adopted by the Army as the M-14 in 1959. While it was a fully automatic rifle with a 20-round detachable magazine, the new weapon still had the hefty recoil of the earlier M-1 and at full auto, was difficult to keep on target. But it was a reliable weapon, and went into service by 1960.

What it really came down to was the size of the cartridge and bullet. The small caliber high velocity (SCHV) concept was first described in an American report by Robert Kent at Aberdeen Proving Ground in 1930. Kent showed that a smaller high-velocity round served as well as or better than the large 7.62mm round. At extremely

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ABOVE: In March, 1967, during Operation Junction City in South Vietnam near the Cambodian border, a soldier from the 9th Infantry Division cleans his M-16. **LEFT:** SP4 Joe Goodman, a forward observer, sights an AK-47 that was captured defending his unit's position during a night attack.

high velocity a lighter bullet was inherently less stable and tumbled upon impact, inflicting larger wounds. But the OC remained faithful to the 7.62mm and the M-14 Rifle.

In other words the M-14 was largely adopted for logistics rather than actual combat—the Army had invested \$500 million in its development and even though it was proven to be almost impossible to fire effectively at full auto, the die was cast.

Enter Eugene Stoner of ArmaLite, an arms manufacturer in Costa Mesa, California. Stoner recognized the superiority of smaller high-velocity rounds in both civilian and military use. Using lightweight stamped aerospace materials and plastic, Stoner created the AR-10, a semiautomatic rifle using the standard 7.62mm round. But it was apparent to Stoner a smaller round would work even better, and he went on to develop the AR-15, a rifle using a smaller .223 caliber bullet, used by NATO as the 5.56mm. This was almost the same caliber as the .22 LR known to all American hunters for plinking at rabbits and squirrels. With a larger cartridge and a thin jacket, the bullet was extremely fast at 3,200 feet per second, more than 400 FPS faster than the M-14's 7.62mm round, and twice as fast as the .22 LR.

Moreover, the AR-15 was far easier to handle at full automatic than the heavier weapon. It weighed 2.5 pounds less than the M-14, and with

the reduced weight of the ammunition, a soldier could carry three times as much ammunition. But ArmaLite, established in 1954 as a Division of Fairchild Engine and Airplane Corporation, was a small development company with no large-scale manufacturing capability. After the Army ruled in favor of the M-14 and directed cancellation of any project not in 7.62mm caliber, ArmaLite went to Cooper-MacDonald, Inc., the international arms sales and marketing firm in Baltimore that had handled the AR-10. Through Cooper-MacDonald, ArmaLite licensed the designs and trademarks of the AR-10 and AR-15 to Colt Firearms of Hartford, Connecticut, in January 1959 and manufacturing of the AR-15 began. Gen. Curtis E. LeMay, the Air Force Chief of Staff, had witnessed a demonstration of the AR-15 in Virginia. He was so impressed by its incredible hitting power, that he immediately ordered 80,000 of them for the Air Force.

Cooper-MacDonald, following its contract with Colt and Fairchild, sent its representatives with the rifle to the Far East to demonstrate it to military officers in the Philippines, Singapore, Indonesia, Thailand, Burma and India. The light weapon and ease of handling made it ideal for the smaller Asian races. It is interesting to note that they had all tested the M-14 and rejected it.

Meanwhile, The U.S. Army was testing the AR-



ABOVE: A Marine cleans his M-16 in front of a bunker during the fighting at Khe Sanh, Vietnam, in February 1968. Gallows humor offered one way to cope in a combat zone. OPPOSITE: Specialist McClanton Miller of the 101st Airborne Division carries an M-16 on patrol in Vietnam in 1966.

15 under simulated combat conditions. In every way that mattered, the new weapon proved exceptional. It was light and easy to handle, reliable and accurate even when fired at full auto. Moreover, even when subjected to moisture, humidity, dirt, dust and other field conditions, it almost never misfired. Still, the Army brass, refusing to let go of their cherished M-14 and the larger round, was not about to admit the truth that the M-14 had been an expensive failure. They insisted the .223 caliber round was too puny for infantry use, regardless of the test results. In other words, they flatly rejected the AR-15 in its current form. This was the case as late as 1962, when the Air Force, having tested the weapon for its own use, and not being fettered to a larger gun, began issuing the new M-16 to its forces around the world for air base security. Another Government agency, the U.S. Secret Service adopted the M-16 for its own use. There was an M-16 in the Secret Service follow-up car in Dallas on November 22, 1963.

The Army's final evaluation reported "the weapon was inferior in some respects to the M-14 and equal to it in others. Consequently, the gun in no way represented enough of an improvement in the state of the art to justify replacing the M-14."

As the U.S. became more involved in the Civil War in Southeast Asia, a Ranger battalion, part of the Military Assistance Command Vietnam, or MAC-V, was shown the rifle by Cooper-MacDonald. Though unofficial, all who fired it were impressed. The DOD learned of the new weapon from outside the procurement process.

Enter Defense Secretary Robert MacNamara, famous for his "bean counter" approach to national defense. His "Whiz Kids," a group of technocrats and mathematicians, were keen to save money by streamlining military procurements. MacNamara believed one plane, the General Dynamics F-111 fighter, could serve the Navy and the Air Force. As it turned out, the Navy version was scrapped in favor of the F-14

Tomcat. But his thinking on all the services using the same rifle was correct, but it would be a fight. After reading conflicting reports, Kennedy had MacNamara's team evaluate it. They saw the M-16's superiority to the M-14 right away. An Inspector General's probe would later prove the Ordnance Corps (OC) had rigged the test in favor of the M-14.

A Cooper-MacDonald representative said, "We saw so much duplicity, chicanery, double-dealing, that (Cooper-MacDonald principle) Robert MacDonald was determined that if it took him to the grave he was going to get the Army to adopt this weapon because it was so superior."

But the Army was not about to give in without a fight. In 1963 it was forced to begin purchasing the M-16 in large numbers. But what they bought was not the same rifle Stoner had designed. The OC decided to do what was essentially industrial sabotage. They insisted on three changes—an unnecessary "forward assist" was fitted to the right side of the receiver, the bore and chamber weren't chromed, and an inferior Olin-Mathieson ball powder was used instead of the DuPont stick powder recommended.

Ostensibly, the forward assist, which added weight and complexity, was meant to "assure" soldiers that a push of the right thumb would more firmly seat the bolt into the firing chamber. No chrome-plating in the chamber meant powder fouling, rust, and corrosion. Since WWII the Army and Marines had known that humid Pacific environments needed the chrome plating. The Olin Ball powder, which left more residue in the bore, was the biggest mistake. It virtually guaranteed the modified rifle would experience stoppages and misfires outside of combat. The Olin-Mathieson powder was recycled and cheaper and the Army insisted it gave the weapon a slightly greater range. Stoner strenuously objected to the change in powder, but the Army insisted. Stoner warned that the ball powder burned more slowly and increased the rifle's cyclic rate of fire, which virtually guaranteed it would suffer worn and broken parts, jams and stoppages, resulting in an unusable weapon. He was right.

When the Army began testing the modified M-16A1, it proved six times as likely to jam as the older version. With a contract to build 40,000 of the rifles per month, Colt was so concerned by the change in powder that they announced they could no longer guarantee the reliability of the M-16A1 in the field.

By 1965 the number of American troops in Vietnam had risen to more than 200,000, a number that would double by the end of the year. No longer considered advisors, the troops were now actively engaged in combat with North Vietnam soldiers, who were largely armed with the deadly

and effective AK-47. Those men needed weapons.

The Army began shipping the new M-16A1 to its troops in 1966 and there were problems from the start. The rifles were issued without cleaning kits or manuals. Troops were told to load only 16 rounds into the 20-round ammo magazine in order not to wear out and weaken its spring. A live round left in the chamber overnight in Southeast Asia's humidity was often frozen in place, causing the extractor to tear off the base, leaving the weapon useless.

Soldiers were told the weapon was easy to maintain and "self-cleaning." They were encouraged to go to the perimeter and fire a few rounds to familiarize themselves with it. As with Jim McGarrath's own experience at Phu Bai, this was a recipe for disaster. The OC's modifications to the M-16A1 were meant to make it fail.

One of the first poor reports from the field came in 1967, according to Fallows, from a letter sent by a Marine officer to Senator Gaylord Nelson (D) Wisconsin, who already opposed the war.

"The weapon has failed us at crucial moments, when we needed firepower most," wrote the Marine. "It left Marines naked to their enemies in each case, and this is no exaggeration, as many as sixty percent of the rifles failed to operate. I know of at least two Marines who died within ten

Continued on page 95



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Alexander Schmorell

The transformation of Hans Scholl from willing Hitler Youth leader to anti-Nazi activist who co-founded the White Rose.

By Kevin Seabrooke

For anyone in Germany who openly opposed Adolf Hitler or the policies of the Nazi party there were three likely outcomes—prison, concentration camp, or execution. The five students and one professor who formed the core of *Die Weiße Rose* (The White Rose) non-violent resistance movement in Munich continue to be remembered and honored as one of the most significant public expressions of Nazi opposition within the Third Reich during the war. They knowingly risked their lives by writing and distributing six anti-Nazi leaflets challenging the regime's ideology. While many groups and individuals resisted Nazi rule, it was the White Rose's public actions—followed by their swift arrest and execution—that made them such a notable example of active defiance.

At the heart of the White Rose was Hans Scholl, who was born in Ingersheim/Württemberg in 1918 and grew up in a liberal Protestant family with three sisters and a brother. The early life of Scholl and his younger sister, Sophie, reflected the prevailing atmosphere of post-World War I Germany. Their father, Robert Scholl, a liberal-minded tax consultant, instilled in his children a sense of independent thought and critical inquiry. The family lived in Forchtenberg, where Robert was mayor, then moved to Ludwigsburg, before settling in Ulm.

Hans was strongly influenced by the *Bündische Jugend* (Youth Movement) comprising many different youth associations that developed in the 1920s as a response to the social and political changes brought



Wikimedia

ABOVE: Klaus-der Hitlerjunge, "Klaus-the Hitler Youth," an illustrated children's book with a preface by Heinrich Himmler, published in Berlin in 1933. TOP: Sophie Scholl stands behind a fence at the Munich rail station before White Rose members Hans Scholl, Christoph Probst, Alexander Schmorell and Willi Graf depart for the Russian front in July 1942.



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WW2 M23 Danish Hand Bomb
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Polish WZ33 Defensive Hand Grenade
Favored for its Blast Effect & Large Blast Radius
Cast Iron Body with WZ31 Fuze Assy.
Accurate new made full size display piece.
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Used throughout WW2 by the 'Resistance'



German Officer Sword
German WW2 Officer sword with leather wire bound grip. Steel EN45 blade over 31-5/8" long. Lion Headommel with red glass eyes. A very 'easy to wield' and ornate sword.,New.
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U.S. WW1 Gas Grenade
New full size in steel. Inert. New.
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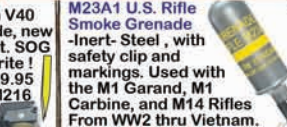
Japanese WW2 Helmet & Net
Large Square type (1-3/8" squares) w/ Rubberized Rim Band
\$62.95 #HLM038 New



German EIER 'Egg' Grenade-steel body. WW1 era, used to clear trenches.
Inert / New.
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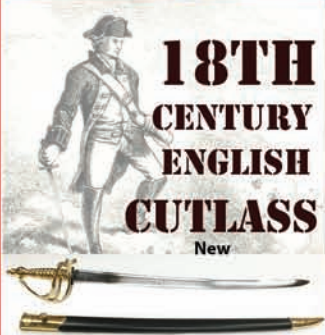
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NSW Austalian fire helmet patterned from the 1800s British helmet. Beautiful solid brass large size helmet with scalloped chin strap.
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18TH CENTURY ENGLISH CUTLASS
New
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BLUE DRAGON SHIELD WOOD WITH METAL CENTRAL BOSS & RIM \$65. #SHIELD-01
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Also available - the Thompson 1928 wartime model without compensator, with horizontal grip & with a 20 rd. stick magazine. Non Firing. \$229.95 #REP13



Celtic Viking Shield
Wood Shield w/ Steel center (boss). \$75. #SHIELD-07



RPG-2 Rocket
Original Vietnam Era Chinese Rocket Fin, Shaft, & Cup w/ replacement Warhead.
\$119.95 #RLO05
Very Limited



THOMPSON 1928 SMG
Replica 'Tommy Gun' that was a nightmare of the roaring 1920s and a famous tool of WW2 combat. Served the U.S. and many other countries due to its simplicity and hard hitting fire power of the .45 ap cartridge. Wood stock and vertical foregrip with metal parts and metal replica 50 rd. drum. Full size and also has functional charging handle, trigger click, and detachable drum magazine. Perfect for the man cave and sure to be the topic of conversation when friends come over! Non Firing. \$245.95 #REP-01
Also available - the Thompson 1928 wartime model without compensator, with horizontal grip & with a 20 rd. stick magazine. Non Firing. \$229.95 #REP13



Ancient ROMAN Pilum Spear- 7 feet long, new. Iron Shaft with Wood handle.
Assembles in 2 pieces!
\$80 #SWRD45



U.S. WW1 Mk2 Rifle Grenade
U.S. Mk2 Gas Grenade of WW1
Over 250,000 of these Rifle Grenades were shipped to our troops in WW1. Also saw service with our troops in the 1918-19 Northern Russia Expedition. These were fired in Springfield 1903, P14, and P17 Rifles.
New Mnfr. Steel
Fully Inert Rods Unscrew
Originally filled with Stannic Chloride or CN compound. Used primarily for clearing enemy trenches & bunkers.
\$45. each #AM247
Sold as a collectible. First time ever offered! For display only.



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complete w/chainmail and liner. Steel & Brass w/ engraved face plate. Fascinating display piece or great for getting your 'Valhalla' on!
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Zulu IKLWA Spear- 50" long
New. \$49.95 #BAY323
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Animal 'hide' leather, stretched over front and back with inter spaced leather strap loops and on the back, straps for securing Spears, Clubs, and a center pole or 'Mgobo' as it was called. Every Shield has a different 'fur' pattern. Elliptical shield is 36.5 inches high @ 18 inches wide.
See Web Site For More Details
\$195. #MISC884
Due to limited inventory, we can't offer specific requests for 'fur color' patterns at this time
SUPPLY VERY LIMITED



Members of both the *Deutsches Jungvolk* (German Youth) section of the *Hitlerjugend* (Hitler Youth) and the *Bund Deutscher Mädel* (Band of German Maidens) at a 1937 May Day rally. Hans and Sophie Scholl and the other members of the White Rose belonged to Hitler Youth groups such as these—it was mandatory in Germany from 1936 onwards.

on by World War I and the rise of new political ideologies. This movement had evolved from one that had existed in Germany since the end of the 19th century, the *Wandervogel* (Wandering Bird), whose members hiked in the country and communed with nature as a response to growing industrialization. Infused with romantic and moral ideals these groups were influenced by medieval wandering scholars, with a strong emphasis on German nationalism and an interest in folk songs.

Hitler, who in his 1925 autobiographical manifesto, *Mein Kampf*, had written that “whoever has the youth has the future,” understood that the attraction and power of these groups could be harnessed. In the years before he was named chancellor of Germany in 1933, Nazi leaders had begun to organize groups that would train young people according to Nazi principles. Through these organizations, it was his intention that the “young people will learn nothing else but how to think German and act German. . . . And they will never be free again, not in their whole lives.”

In 1933, the Hitler Youth took over all but the Catholic youth movements in Germany. And those were eliminated by 1936, the same year that some form of Nazi youth group became compul-

sory for all “Aryan” children aged 6 and older. At 10, boys joined the *Deutsches Jungvolk* (German Young People) until they were 14 and promoted to the *Hitler-Jugend* (Hitler Youth). Girls started with the *Jungmädelsbund* (Young Girls’ League), then moved on to the *Bund Deutscher Mädel* (BDM or Band of German Maidens).

To the dismay of their parents, who rejected fascism, Hans and Sophie were caught up in the nationalist fervor in Germany and embraced the ideals of the *Nationalsozialistische deutsche Arbeiterpartei* (National Socialist German Workers’ Party). Hans joined the Jungvolk in 1933 and quickly became a squad leader. Tall, athletic and intelligent, he would be chosen as a flag bearer at the 1936 Nuremberg Rally. In 1934, Sophie became a junior member of the BDM and also rose to a leadership position.

By all accounts, the siblings seemed to find camaraderie and a sense of purpose in the Hitler Youth organizations. It seems unlikely that, given the level of Nazi propaganda and censorship, the pair knew anything of the significance of the Reichstag fire or the Enabling Act that made Hitler a virtual dictator that same year or of his “Blood Purge”—the murder of at least 85 politi-

cal opponents and the imprisonment of 1,000—in the summer of 1934.

By 1940, Hitler Youth membership had grown to 8 million, though by this time circumstances had changed dramatically for Hans. He and his younger brother, Werner, had been arrested by the Gestapo in December 1937 on charges of belonging to the banned “German Youth Group for Boys of November 1, 1929” (dj.1.11). Werner and the others were quickly released. For Hans, however, the events of the next few months would completely alter the course of his short life.

Though Paragraph 175 of the German criminal code outlawing homosexual relationships between men had existed since 1871 (and would not be repealed until 1994), it was the Nazis in 1935 that broadened the definition of offending behavior and reclassified it as a felony. An estimated 100,000 men were arrested for violating Paragraph 175 during the Nazi regime. Some 50,000 were sent to prison and as many as 15,000 were sent to concentration camps wearing a pink triangle.

Hans, who told the Gestapo he had not known it was illegal, admitted a previous relationship with another boy in his youth group and took all the blame himself. In a letter to his parents from

prison in Stuttgart, Hans wrote that he had struggled in secret with his sexual urges. The traumatic experience of having his life exposed and torn apart by the Gestapo was the impetus from which his loathing of Nazism really began to grow. In another letter to his parents from prison, he vowed to do “something great for the sake of mankind.”

This is an aspect of Hans’ life that remained in shadow for decades and was completely left out of *The White Rose: Munich 1942-1943*, written by his oldest sister, Inge, and published in 1983. The book features letters, diary excerpts, and transcriptions of the White Rose leaflets, as well as accounts of the trial and execution. But there is no mention of his arrest for violating Paragraph 175. She feared the moral and ethical bravery exhibited by Hans would be tarnished by any hint of homosexuality and made Sophie the focus of the story—something many films, books and articles continue to do to this day.

Surprisingly, Hans was acquitted on both counts in June 1938, given leniency by the judge for his career in the Hitler Youth. Though the prosecutor had asked for a years’ sentence for Paragraph 175, the judge dismissed the homosexual affair as a “youthful failing.”

Hans then entered the *Reichsarbeitsdienst* (Reich Labour Service or RAD) a compulsory labor service for young German men, often serving as a precursor to military service and designed to instill discipline and loyalty to the state. Following this service, he began medical studies at the Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich in the summer semester of 1939.

As with most young people entering university, Hans was now exposed to a much wider range of ideas and perspectives. He met professors and fellow students who held Christian-ethical viewpoints that stood in stark contrast to the prevailing Nazi ideology. This exposure to dissenting voices and alternative moral frameworks was crucial in developing his critical thinking and providing intellectual support for his growing opposition to Nazism. This hub of diverse perspectives and challenges to the dominant narrative was a stark contrast to the rigid indoctrination of the Hitler Youth and likely gave him a sense that he was not alone in doubting the regime.

Hans would undergo another personal and moral transformation when he was drafted into the Wehrmacht as a medical orderly and sent to the French front in May 1940, where he would attain the rank of medical sergeant. Here he witnessed firsthand the devastating human consequences of the Nazi regime’s aggressive policies and ideology. Any illusions he might still have held regarding the glory or justification of the war would have been shattered by the suffering he witnessed. The experience would have further amplified his sense of the



ABOVE: From left, Hans Scholl, Sophie Scholl, and Christoph Probst, at the University of Munich in 1942. All three were arrested by the Gestapo on February 18, 1943, and beheaded for their involvement with the White Rose non-violence resistance group opposing Hitler and the Nazi Party. **BELOW:** Executions of Kyiv Jews by *Einsatzgruppen* (German army mobile killing units) near Ivanograd, Ukraine, in 1942. Hans Scholl, Alexander Schmorell and Willi Graf would have witnessed similar scenes working in medical units on the Russian front from July-October 1942.



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war’s futility and the moral bankruptcy of those who initiated and perpetuated it.

Hans resumed his studies in Munich in April 1941 and was assigned to the 2nd Student Company of the Army Medical Squadron—where in June he would meet Alexander Schmorell, the future co-founder of the White Rose movement. The young men shared literary and artistic interests, as well as a growing disillusionment with

National Socialism.

In the fall of 1941, he was introduced to the Catholic intellectuals Theodor Haecker and Carl Muth—indeed, Hans and Sophie would rent rooms in Muth’s house until late 1942, when Allied bombing raids made it uninhabitable. This period marked a profound transformation for Hans, moving him from an initial enthusiastic supporter of the Nazi regime to an individual



All/Wikimedia Commons



Guillotine used on February 22, 1943, at Munich's Stadelheim Prison to behead Hans Scholl, Sophie Scholl and Christoph Probst (top row, from left). Also beheaded were Alexander Schmorell and Professor Kurt Huber, July 13, and Willi Graf, October 12 (bottom row, from left).

deeply critical and actively seeking alternative perspectives. The influence of Muth and Haecke introduced a strong ethical and religious dimension to Hans' developing critique of Nazism

The White Rose movement would officially begin in June 1942 with the first *Flugblätter der "Weißen Rose" Wider die "Diktatur des Bösen"* (leaflet of the "White Rose" against the "dictatorship of evil.") The text for each leaflet was typed on a typewriter, then retyped onto the stencils of a hand-cranked mimeograph machine that Hans bought and kept stored in the basement of Josef Söhngen's bookstore, a place where the group gathered and had access to banned literature.

They produced about 100 copies of each of the first four leaflets, distributed between June 27 and July 12, 1942. Friends and associates helped with money for paper and postage so that they could be mailed to officials and intellectuals in Munich and other cities. Some were placed in public phone booths. Hans and Schmorell were appealing to a more educated audience by quoting extensively from the Bible, as well as the works of classical thinkers and writers such as Aristotle, Novalis, Goethe, and Schiller. "Please make as many copies as possible of this leaflet and distribute them," was typed at the bottom of the first leaflet.

The first and fourth leaflets were written by Hans, who co-authored the second and third with Schmorell. The content of these early leaflets directly addressed the atrocities committed by the Nazi regime—explicitly mentioning the Holo-

caust and the systematic extermination of the Polish aristocracy and Jewish people. The first leaflet urged Germans to confront their complicity, stating that every nation deserves the government it endures, and called for active opposition to the ruling "irresponsible clique."

A second leaflet came out in June, condemning crimes committed by Germans in the name of National Socialism, specifically denouncing the persecution and mass murder of Jews as a crime against humanity, and asked its readers "Why do the German people behave so apathetically in the face of all these abominable crimes, crimes so unworthy of the human race?"

"We must attack National Socialism wherever it is open to attack. We must bring this monster of a state to an end as soon as possible. A victory of fascist Germany in this war would have immeasurable, frightful consequences," declared the third White Rose leaflet. This text defined passive resistance, advocated sabotage of the war machine, and argued that the defeat of National Socialism was more important than a military victory over Bolshevism. It ended with, "Please duplicate and distribute!"

Growing bolder, the fourth leaflet said that "every word that comes from Hitler's mouth is a lie. When he says peace, he means war, and when he blasphemously uses the name of the Almighty, he means the power of evil, the fallen angel, Satan." This missive primarily targeted devout Lutherans and religious Catholics by incorporat-

ing biblical references from Solomon's proverbs and the strong Catholic imagery found in the writings of Novalis in an appeal to their moral conscience and urged them to resist. Readers were assured that the authors of the White Rose were not in the pay of foreign powers and declared, "We will not be silent. We are your bad conscience. The White Rose will not leave you in peace!"

Hans, Schmorell and others of their inner circle in their military medical company, were sent to the Eastern Front in Russia on July 23, 1942, forcing a halt to their resistance activities.

They would be in Russia until November, providing medical service to the troops as clinical training. On the way to the front they spent several days in Warsaw, where they were horrified by the criminal treatment—beatings, indiscriminate murder—to which the Jews in the ghetto were subjected. They would go on to see more death, pain and wartime atrocities at the front. They would also meet and become acquainted with local Russians under occupation. The Russian experience would radicalise the young men.

During this time Hans was able to see his younger brother Werner, who was stationed nearby serving as a medical officer in the Wehrmacht. Werner had been the first of the Scholl siblings to openly resist the Nazis by resigning from the Hitler Youth in the summer of 1939, a move which barred him from attending university. The brothers saw each other regularly during these three months. After he returned to Munich, Hans would see his



ABOVE: Monument to the White Rose resistance movement against the Nazi regime, at the Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich. RIGHT: Atrium of the University of Munich where Hans and Sophie Scholl were caught distributing anti-Nazi leaflets on February 18, 1943.

brother only one more time, in the courtroom during his trial. Werner, 21, was listed as missing in action on the Eastern Front in June 1944.

Hans and the other White Rose members, which now included Willi Graf, who they had met on the way to Russia, returned to Munich on November 6, 1942, and expanded their efforts, hoping to find and encourage activists at other universities. Allied bombing of German cities and setbacks at the Russian front had begun to change the public mood. Christoph Probst, one of Schmorell's close friends, and Munich university philosophy professor Kurt Huber also joined the resistance efforts. Sophie also now became involved. She had known of the resistance since the first leaflet. Hans had mailed it to their parent's home in Ulm, where Sophie had read it and recognized a reference. She found the book in Hans' room, with the passage underlined.

The fifth leaflet was an "Appeal to all Germans!" written in late January 1943 by Kurt Huber, based on a draft by Hans. No longer was the group calling for passive resistance, but urging the nation in direct language to break with National Socialism and overthrow the regime. The letter closed with, "Support the resistance. Distribute the leaflets!" An estimated 5,000 copies of this one were produced. In addition to the mailings, which were now sent out to a much wider area, the leaflets were delivered by hand at night all over Munich. As if that were not risky

enough, Hans, Schmorell, and Graf would then spend several nights writing "Freedom" and "Down with Hitler!" on buildings throughout the city.

The final White Rose leaflet, written by Huber, was addressed specifically to "Fellow Students!" in Munich, appealing to their intellect and conscience to resist the Nazi tyranny, drawing on the grief following the defeat at Stalingrad to stir patriotic feelings against National Socialism—"Our people stand ready to rebel against the National Socialist enslavement of Europe in a fervent new breakthrough of freedom and honor."

While lectures were in session at the University of Munich on February 18, 1943, Hans and Sophie took a suitcase full of copies of the sixth leaflet to leave outside of each room. When they had finished, there were still leaflets left. What happened next is not definitively known, but most accounts depict Sophie throwing the extra leaflets from the balcony down to the atrium floor—an act witnessed by a senior janitor who took the pair to the university president's office, where they were arrested by the Gestapo.

Robert Mohr, the primary Gestapo interrogator, initially believed Sophie might be innocent. Mohr would say after the war that he tried to lead Sophie to testify against Hans, to say she was

under his influence, in order to save her life. But she refused, declaring, even after Hans had confessed, that she was solely responsible. The pair tried to shield the others from persecution, but were unsuccessful. Hans, who had been caught carrying Probst's handwritten draft for a seventh White Rose leaflet, tried to tear it up and swallow it. Probst was also arrested.

The head of the SS, Heinrich Himmler, ordered the family members of the White Rose to be rounded up based on the Nazi principle of *Sippenhaft* (guilt by relation). The students and Huber were expelled from the university and those who were medics in the Wehrmacht were discharged. This allowed them to be tried by the infamous Judge Roland Freisler of the *Volksgerichtshof* (People's Court), a special Nazi court operating outside the normal legal framework and known for its politically motivated judgments.

Just four days after their arrest, Hans and



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Sophie, along with Probst, faced a sham trial on February 22, 1943, that disregarded all principles of justice. Though defendants were not permitted to speak, a defiant Sophie reportedly interrupted the judge multiple times, with statements such as, "what we wrote and said is also believed by many others. They just don't dare express themselves."

When Werner arrived home in Ulm on leave in February 1943, he found out about the arrest of his siblings. He and his parents, Robert and Magdalena, went to the trial in Munich. They barged into the courtroom as the verdict was about to be read, but his parents were removed.

In uniform, Werner managed to stay and found a chance to take the hands of Hans and Sophie as they were led out of the court. Robert and Magdalena would get one more chance to see their children, but Werner was not permitted. Werner and his parents went home, planning to return the next day.

All three defendants were beheaded by guillotine at Stadelheim Prison in Munich just hours

Continued on page 96

UNIFORM

18th Georgia Infantry Regiment, 1862

Keith Rocco

CAP: French chasseur-style gray kepi with blue band.

BACKPACK: Box hardpack knapsack, tarred canvas and leather with wood frame.

CARTRIDGE BOX: Imported S. Isaac Campbell & Company, London, leather covered box suspended from a wide, canvas cloth sling.

CAP BOX: Leather Atlanta Arsenal, shield-front pouch.

MUSKET: Model 1842 .69 caliber smoothbore musket.

COAT: Military-style butter-nut colored greatcoat with brass buttons.

BELT: Simple roller-buckle-style waist belt.

BAG: Cotton canvas haversack to carry rations.

SHOES: Army brogans.

The 18th Georgia Infantry Regiment was raised in April 1861, in Cobb County, with training near Kennesaw at Camp McDonald.

Consisting of about 750 men in 10 companies, the regiment was sent north to Richmond in August to guard Union prisoners captured at the Battle of Bull Run.

After three months, they were sent to join several Texas regiments in Northern Virginia to fill out the "Texas Brigade."

The unit saw combat in several engagements, including Eltham's Landing, Seven Pines and Gaines' Mill. Two months later, serving in Longstreet's Corps, they fought in the Second Battle of Bull Run, where the unit captured

colors from the 10th and 24th New York Regiments. Along with the Texas Brigade, they attacked and nearly destroyed the 5th New York Regiment.

The 18th Georgia fought at Antietam in September of 1862. After transferring to Cobb's Georgia Brigade, they went on to Fredericksburg and, soon after, Chancellorsville.

They were part of Lee's invasion of the north in June 1863, going on to fight at Gettysburg, where they rejoined Longstreet to attack west of Little Round Top on the second day.

In September 1863, they went west with Longstreet, fighting at Chickamauga, and Fort Sanders, returning to Lee's Army of Northern Virginia in May 1864. They continued serving with Longstreet until the final battle at Sailor's Creek, and the surrender at Appomattox Court House. ■

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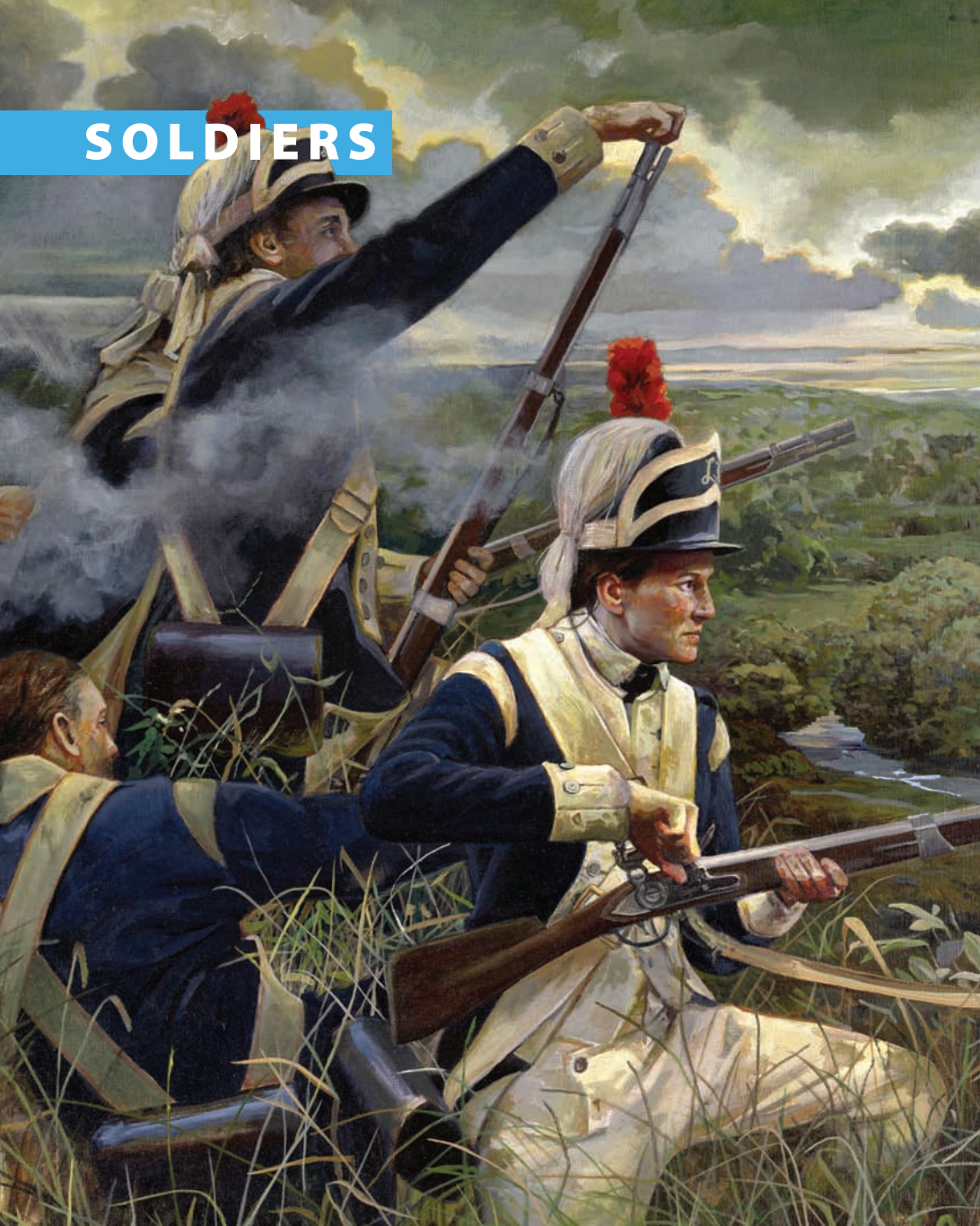
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SOLDIERS



Pamela Patrick White/www.whitehistorcart.com

Dressed as Private “Robert Shurtliff” in a light infantry soldier’s uniform with leather helmet and a blue coat with white facings, Deborah Sampson, right, reloads her French Charleville musket during a 1782 firefight with New York loyalists. Painting by Pamela Patrick White. Below, an 18th century portrait of Deborah Sampson painted after the war.



At 5-foot-7 Sampson, now 22, was of above-average height for a man of her day, and much taller than most 18th century women, so her size would not be a problem in keeping her secret. Luckily, sideburns were not then in fashion. Tightly binding her breasts she gave herself a flat-chested appearance, then pulled on a man’s shirt, breeches, waistcoat, overcoat, hat and buckle shoes. It was an outfit one saw every day on young men who worked outdoors, and she was pleased at her convincing appearance as she gazed into a full-length looking glass. She was not a beautiful woman, but this transformation had produced a handsome “man.”

Being raised with four brothers, and having boarded with a farmer and his eight (later ten) sons, Sampson was knowledgeable in male ways and gifted with a naturally low voice.

With confidence she soon set out to join the Continental Army. Her first attempt was at the town of Middleborough, Massachusetts, but her true identity was discovered before she was able to leave for the Army camp. Undaunted, she was making a second attempt in another town when she was approached by an unfamiliar man who turned out to be a “speculator”—then a common

Disguised as a man, Deborah Sampson fought the British in the Revolutionary War.

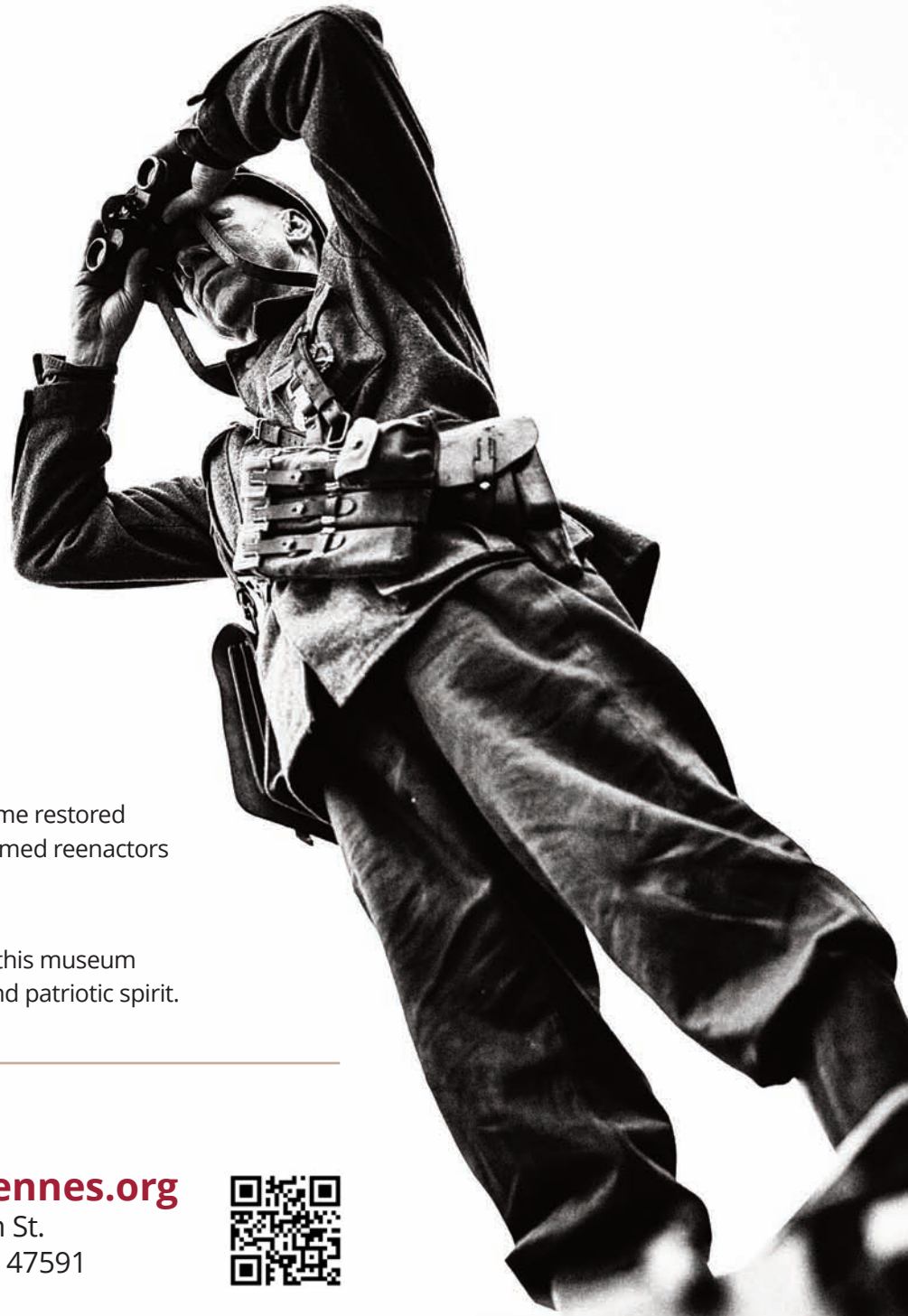
By Kelly Bell

Yearning for more out of life than a woman could hope for in her place and time, Deborah Sampson took the only opportunity she could see to fully realize her patriotic ambitions and wanderlust—she cut her waist-length blonde hair, put on men’s clothes and joined the Continental Army to fight for the embryonic country’s independence during the American Revolution.

Born in 1760, Sampson was completely on her own by the age of 17, supporting herself by teaching school and earning board by sewing for local families. When their need for a seamstress was satisfied she would move on to the next brood awaiting her services. When she heard of Gen. George Washington’s 1782 call for 20,000 volunteer recruits to repulse British efforts to reverse the colonies’ mounting military momentum, Sampson decided to forgo sewing and to act on a forbidden dream before the fighting ended.

Relive the Story at INDIANA MILITARY MUSEUM

At the **Indiana Military Museum**, in Vincennes, Ind., relive the glory and the heartbreak of military battle. See aircraft, vehicles, artillery, uniforms and more spanning from the Civil War to present day at the museum recently featured on the History Channel hit show "American Pickers." In the museum's annex, tour immersive, life-sized scenes from the World War I trenches and home front, complete with sound effects and even trench rats. This museum is also completely handicapped accessible, all on one floor, for people of all abilities.



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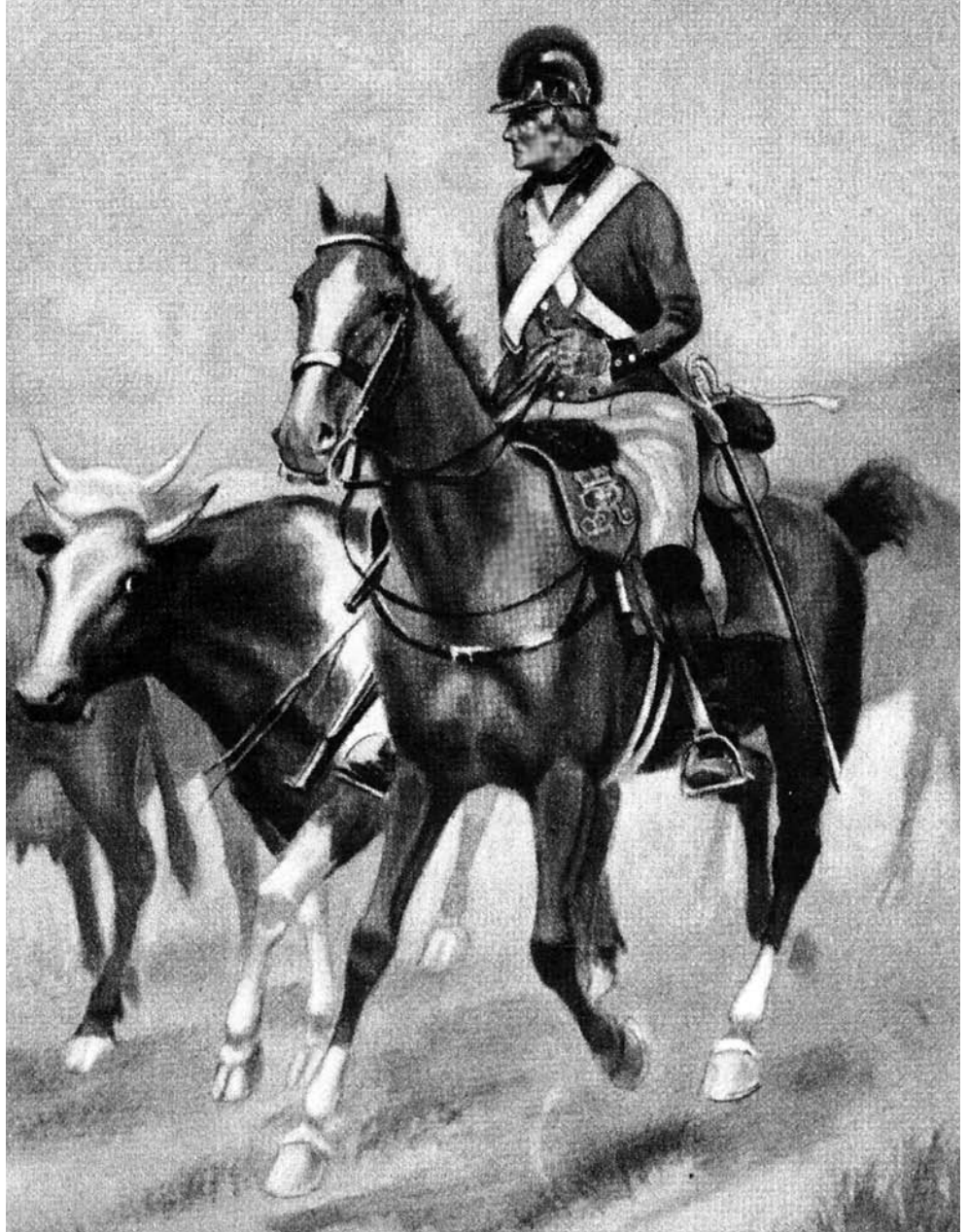
term for Army recruiter. She traveled with the speculator in an ox cart to Worcester, where she told the Army recruiting officer that she was just 17, hoping to allay any suspicions about her beardlessness. On May 20, 1782, she signed up for a 3-year enlistment using the name “Robert Shurtliff,” the first and middle names of her eight-year-old brother who had died just before her birth.

Sampson was assigned to the 4th Massachusetts Regiment, which had been formed in April 1775 from 12 Minuteman companies of armed civilian militia. She and her fellow rookies were now commanded by Sergeant William Gambel, but there was little time to get acquainted before the unit marched west and south, crossing a portion of Connecticut, to the Hudson River, a journey of two weeks of trudging through thunderstorms and freakish freezing weather in early June. The column, swollen from 50 to 300 by yet more recruits joining along the trek, crossed the river via ferry and set off down a stagecoach road for the final 13 miles to the military fortress of West Point. Upon reaching the bristling bastion, Sampson was filled with excitement—not only was she finally a professional soldier, but part of a vital garrison.

At the Point she was billeted with other infantrymen, issued a uniform, along with a French Charleville musket. The rest of her gear included a cartridge box with a sling, a bayonet with a scabbard, a wooden canteen, a haversack containing rations, an extra shirt, blanket and a King James Bible.

The military routine was not difficult for Sampson as she drilled and helped plant vegetable gardens on orders directly from General Washington (who was anxious to head off outbreaks of scurvy). She kept to herself, concealed her sex by avoiding the communal latrines during the day (the bordering forest provided an alternative) and bathed only occasionally at night in the Hudson River. The main problem was her monthly period. Trading her rum ration for strips of cloth the men used as towels she used them to absorb the blood which otherwise would have stained her white breeches and revealed her secret. Not once did she allow menstruation to interfere with her soldiering.

Sampson’s size, agility and marksmanship landed her an assignment to the crack Light Infantry company. During campaigns they were temporarily divorced from their parent regiments and reassembled into provisional units for special missions. She was further elated at not only infiltrating the male stronghold of the Army, but at winning such exalted status within it. Her company was commanded by Capt. George Webb, and was part of the 1st Brigade under Gen. John Paterson, with overall authority vested in West Point commandant Maj. Gen. Henry Knox, who sent his Light Infantry on missions requiring



Part of DeLancey’s Brigade under the command of Loyalist Colonel James DeLancey, sometimes referred to as “DeLancey’s Cow-Boys,” operated primarily in Westchester County north of New York City in an area known as the “Neutral Ground” where they stole cattle and terrorized Patriot families while gathering intelligence.

above-average intelligence and stealth, such as scouting enemy movements, espionage, sabotage and taking prisoners for interrogation. While historical records regarding Sampson’s military service are scarce, soon after her arrival at the Point, Sampson’s company was ordered to prepare for a four-day excursion.

General Washington had ordered a scouting foray southward to Harlem, eight miles outside New York City. It required a 50-mile march through disputed territory to a burg within the British sphere of control, and should any soldiers

be captured by the enemy they were certain to be treated as spies and hanged. With a combination of fear and exhilaration Sampson and her comrades embarked on their quest.

It was a vital mission. Loyalist cavalry commanded by English officers were using New York City as a base for raiding Patriot-owned farms, spying on American movements and attacking isolated units. General Washington was targeting one unit of Tories in particular.

Composed mainly of troops of recent Dutch ancestry, the Westchester Light Horse Battalion,

part of Oliver DeLancey's brigade of New York loyalist troops, was stationed at Morrisania near Long Island Sound and commanded by Col. James DeLancey. Behaving like a pack of hoodlum freebooters they regularly raided local settlements, plundering, raping and burning. It was not a situation to be tolerated, so Sampson and 40 fellow soldiers packed their haversacks and set out to penetrate as far as possible into hostile territory, noting enemy movements, dispositions and any new fortifications, before returning with their intelligence so that a punitive expedition could be mounted to put a stop to the excesses of DeLancey's raiders.

On the second morning, the unit split into two groups so as to be able to reconnoiter a larger area and agreed to rendezvous that evening at White Plains, to the southeast. Reaching Harlem, Sampson's band, under the command of Ens. Jacob Towne, crept inside British lines and took careful note of enemy troop strength and deployment, recrossed the 1776 battlefields and rejoined their compatriots.

After passing the night at White Plains, the detachment set out for Tarrytown. Soon after getting underway they were jolted by a volley of musketry from off to the side of the trail they were following. A ball cut the red-tipped feather from Sampson's cap. Another thudded into a tree just behind her. Spinning to face her assailants she saw a force of cavalry and two red-coated officers. As her sergeant roared, "FIRE!" she crouched and added her first-ever shot in battle to the chorus of reports around her, and saw a number of the horsemen topple from their mounts. A column of infantry then appeared beside the riders and poured another volley into the Patriots, dropping several of them as the noncom bellowed, "RETREAT!" As she followed him into the comparative shelter of the forest, another lead ball tore through her sleeve and she could hear Continental troops screaming off to either side of her as they were hit.

From out of nowhere, a barrage of gunfire rang out from in front of the fleeing rebels, followed by shrieks of pain and astonishment from the Tories. Three platoons of Patriot troops out of Tarrytown had arrived and they now decimated the enemy, as the surviving Redcoats took to their heels. Col. Ebenezer Sproat of the 2nd Massachusetts Regiment had come to the rescue. He and his men had heard the shooting from their nearby post and raced to take part in the meleé.

After examining the fallen Redcoats, the Continentals realized they had been attacked by the DeLancey Regiment itself and, if not for Sproat's timely arrival, would likely have been wiped out by this gang of war criminals who rarely took prisoners. It was a baptism of fire more terrifying than most, but "Robert Shurtliff" had reacted well and come through it alive and prepared for more.

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Roaming bands of Loyalist militias often harassed Patriot households and farms. Here a woman offers the men money to leave them in peace. In Massachusetts, Deborah Sampson found herself living in the middle of this civil war between the two sides.

In what may have been Sampson's next combat episode, possibly in September 1782, her sergeant, Calvin Munn, asked if she wished to volunteer for "a special mission to retaliate on the enemy." Munn and Sampson went to their new regimental commander, Col. Henry Jackson, and outlined their plan. Although skeptical of its chances, he agreed to give his permission if they could convince 28 more troops to volunteer for the raid. By the end of the day the pair had rounded up the required number, and the next morning they set out for a place she called "Von Hoite," possibly the home of William Haight.

The Hights were a large family in this area of Westchester County, New York, which was a heavily contested "Neutral Ground" between British-held New York City and American lines. DeLancey's cowboys were involved in some 40 raids and skirmishes in the area.

Recent research suggests this action may have taken place near Tarrytown, where they hoped to catch DeLancey's command by surprise. Arriving at the town's outskirts they took up positions in the surrounding woods and awaited the expected

plundering of local residences.

When a couple of boys carrying a load of provisions appeared making their way through the woods, Mann intercepted them and asked what they were doing.

"We're hiding food the Tories stole," replied the youthful Loyalist, who added, "They left to get some Yankees who have been sniping at them, but they're coming back for the food."

Playing along, Mann told the boys that he and his men were also Tories and asked to see what supplies they had.

The naive boys led the soldiers inside a nearby cave, which was full of bundles of bacon, butter, cheese and jars of honey. The hungry rebels stuffed themselves, filled their haversacks and then told the shocked youngsters their true identity. Mann sent the boys scurrying home, knowing they would spread the word about the infiltrators. He planned to attack the Loyalists when they came to survey the damage to their food cache, so he had his command return to the woods to wait.

Several hours after dark a mounted party of about 40 Tories arrived at the cave. The rebels

fired a volley into the clump of enemy soldiers, wounding several. The shots in the dark were not overly accurate, and the attackers received heavy return fire—then the Loyalists began acting confused. Some retreated while others charged their unseen antagonists. Sampson watched in horrified fascination as a Tory officer whose horse had been shot from under him bore down on her with an upraised sabre. Recalling her training of the past few weeks she lunged against the man's right arm and diverted a potentially fatal blow from her throat to her forehead. She was momentarily stunned, then enraged, clubbing the man to the ground with her musket. She then followed the example of some of her comrades, swinging into the saddle of a riderless horse and pounding off in pursuit of the retreating Loyalists, catching up with them at the edge of a swamp.

Seeing the charging Patriots the enemy dashed off to either side, attempting to escape without bogging down in the mire. Disgusted, Sampson watched them flee in terror from armed foes. Now that they were facing battle-tested equals rather than the defenseless civilians they were accustomed to victimizing, the DeLancey troops showed their true, cowardly colors.

After the war, Sampson claimed that she was wounded in this engagement, but the details of where on her body she was wounded, and how she was treated for her wounds, remain unclear. Sampson also stated that she was treated for her wounds by a French Army surgeon. There is strong evidence that Sampson was indeed wounded during her army service, and it is possible that she was treated at a French Army camp located in the area.

There was still action in the offing despite Preliminary Articles of Peace being agreed upon between the United States and Great Britain in Paris on November 30, 1782. General Washington had declared in his official orders for October: "The readiest way to promote lasting and honorable peace is to be fully prepared vigorously to prosecute war." Clearly, the general had not forgotten the powerful Loyalist force at nearby Worcester.

Sampson described being part of a scouting party sent on December 1st to reconnoiter the disputed turf outside Peekskill Hollow. Moving along a trail south of the town the Patriots were bushwhacked by Tory cavalry, but after scattering their assailants with a well-aimed volley they escaped with no casualties. The exhausted, chilled Continentals later stopped at a house owned by an old widow named Hunt, who claimed to be a rebel sympathizer. The old woman sent her slave George ostensibly for provisions for her guests. Sampson, who grew suspicious of the widow, whispered to her sergeant, "I think she's sent George to trap us." He agreed, and ordered his troops to depart despite

their hostess' loud protests.

The Patriots emerged from the house in time to see a large force of Redcoat cavalry pounding toward them, trapping them against the deep and swift Croton River. George saved them by showing them to a submerged sandbar where they could ford with their heads above water. Despite the shallower water, the current swept Sampson off her feet. She nearly drowned before grabbing a rope thrown from the opposite shore. Their wet uniforms froze to their bodies and they nearly succumbed to hypothermia before they found a general store. They crowded inside, drinking in the warmth and a cask of brandy they bought.

A last episode of combat was described by Sampson's biographer, Herman Mann, who published her memoir in 1797, and later wrote an expanded manuscript. While much of this work is clearly "embellished," it is based on Sampson's own oral descriptions of what she experienced.

General Phillip Schuyler at Fort Edward, just north of Albany, New York, requested reinforcements to oppose the increasing depredations of the Iroquois Confederation. The Mohawk tribe had stepped up its attacks on Patriot forces and communities as the war appeared increasingly lost for England, and Sampson was part of an expedition to northernmost New York to assist Schuyler in this overlooked theater of operations.



LEFT: James DeLancey served as a colonel in his uncle's loyalist unit, DeLancey's Brigade, enlisting some 1,500 American volunteers during the war. RIGHT: General John Paterson commanded a brigade of Massachusetts regiments, including the one in which Sampson/ Shurtliff served.

Mann wrote that Sampson's party encountered a blood-splattered settler staggering from a thicket, who then led them to a log cabin. In the cabin's doorway was the corpse of the man's wife hacked to death by tomahawks. His two little boys dangled by their heels from a tree in the front yard, also dead.

A grim-faced sergeant asked the bereaved father which way the assailants had gone. When the widower pointed to a nearby hill, the detachment set out as fast as they could. Cresting the rise they saw about 70 Mohawks around a large fire. The Amer-

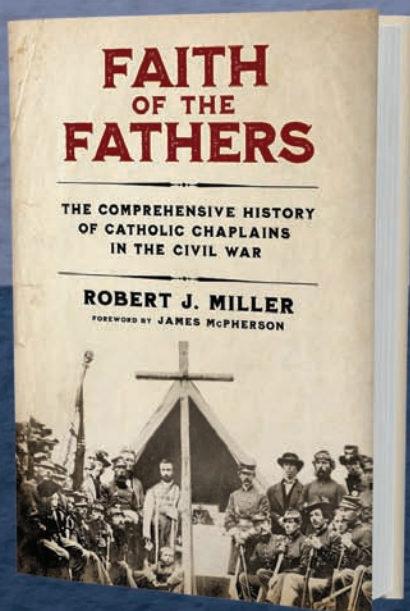
icans charged and killed some of the warriors with their first volley. The Continentals, intent on allowing none to escape, resolutely closed with their quarry, killing 15, and capturing 20.

Over the next several weeks Sampson's expedition surprised and captured more Mohawk marauders before returning to their regiment, encamped in New Windsor, New York in late January 1783.

Upon her return Sampson was selected to serve as an orderly to Brig. Gen. John Paterson. He had started the war as Colonel of the 1st Massachusetts Regiment, fought at Bunker Hill, and marched to Quebec with Benedict Arnold's invasion of Canada in 1775. Returning to Washington's command, he served at the battles of Trenton, Princeton, and later, Monmouth. In 1777 he commanded a brigade under Horatio Gates during the Saratoga campaign.

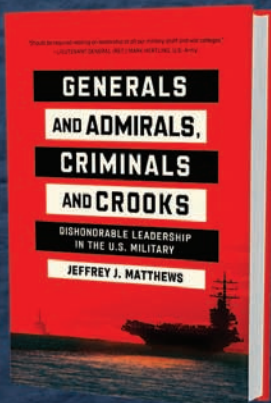
General Paterson selected Sampson for his "military family," based on stories of her "heroism, fidelity, and military deportment." She is believed to have served with him for as long as six months in 1783, first at New Windsor, and later at West Point, where he was occasionally put in temporary command of the fort.

Sampson's exact role as an orderly for the general is unknown, but she may simply have been employed as a servant, or perhaps acted as a



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courier. In any case, staying at Paterson's headquarters enabled her to avoid sleeping in a soldier's hut with six or more other men. This would have made her deception easier to hide.

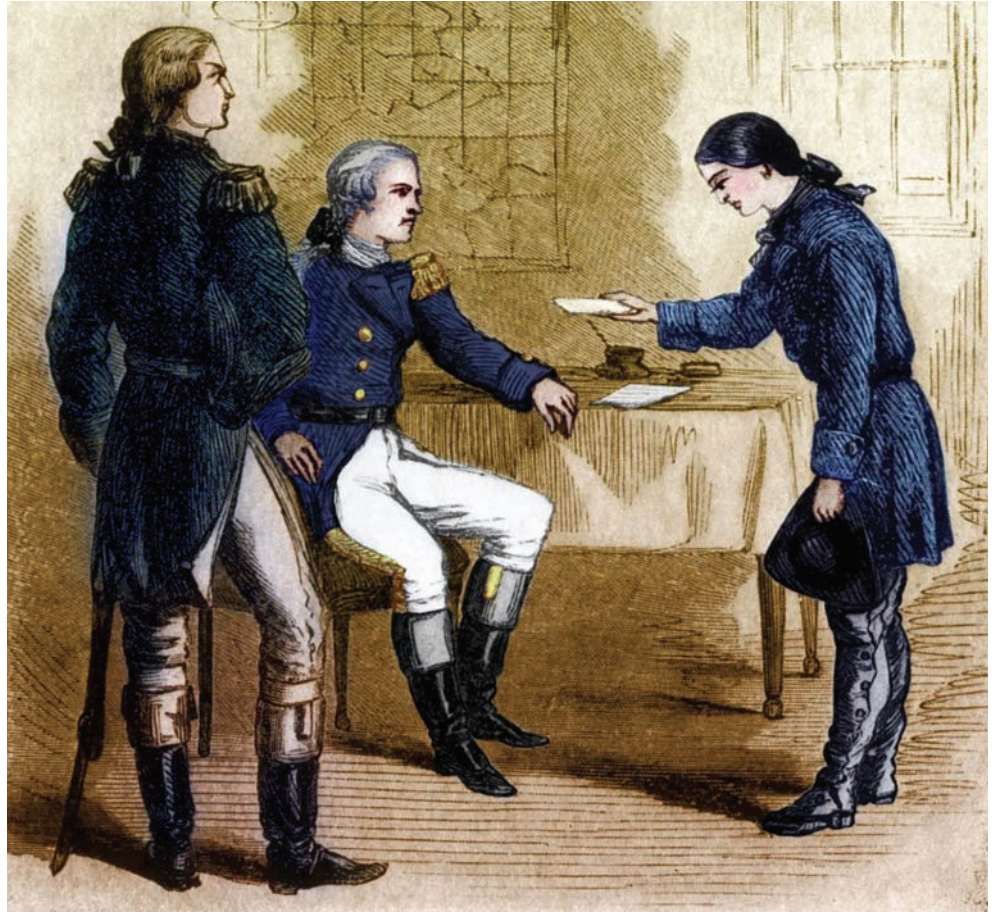
While serving with General Paterson, Sampson would have been present in the Continental encampment when hundreds of officers petitioned Congress for a redress of grievances over back pay, military pensions, and other concerns. Having stopped army pay in early 1782, and promising arrears would be made up at the conclusion of the war, Congress was now unable to find a way to raise the funds necessary to make good on this promise. For several weeks rumors ran through the army, led by a number of senior officers, including Horatio Gates, a longtime rival of Washington. Frustrated by Congress's lack of support, these officers were threatening to refuse to disband the army once a peace treaty with Great Britain was verified.

This "rebellion" culminated in a meeting of several hundred officers addressed by General Washington on March 15, 1783. Not expecting him to attend the meeting, Washington surprised Gates and others when he appeared and asked to speak. He admonished the group, insisting they should oppose anyone who "wickedly attempts to open the floodgates of civil discord and deluge our rising empire in blood." Washington held a letter he intended to read to the officers, and pulled a new pair of reading glasses out of a pocket. Pausing as he put them on, he said, "Gentlemen, you will permit me to put on my spectacles, for I have not only grown gray but almost blind in the service of my country."

Surprised by the sight of Washington wearing reading glasses, many in the group understood that he had sacrificed as much, or more, than they had during the eight years of war. According to witnesses, some of those present were moved to tears by Washington's comment and this officer's rebellion was effectively over. General Knox, one of Washington's most loyal officers who had refused to support the rebellion, agreed to work with other officers to find a suitable response to Congress. Within weeks Congress promised a compromise, agreeing to provide full pay to each officer for five years service in the form of government bonds.

Sampson would have been aware of these events because Paterson was a leading supporter of the officer's petitions. As an enlisted soldier, she had nothing to gain in this campaign for back pay and pensions, but she would also have witnessed the increased frustration of the rank and file soldiers for the same lack of pay from Congress.

By late March news arrived that the peace treaty with Great Britain had been signed, and there was much celebration among the soldiers of all ranks for several days. While waiting for the British Army to evacuate New York City, the soldiers



This 19th century illustration, based on the artist's fancy, depicts Deborah Sampson—as "Robert Shurtliff"—passing a letter from Dr. Barnabas Binney to General Paterson, revealing her true sex.

grew increasingly angry at not being paid for helping win their country's freedom. In June, the Continental Army was officially furloughed, and Congress furnished soldiers with promissory notes for back pay. With no money for the long trip home, some soldiers were forced to sell their promissory notes to speculators at a lesser value in exchange for hard currency.

On June 14, Washington received news that several hundred Continental soldiers from Pennsylvania were involved in a mutiny near Philadelphia, and threatening Congress. He immediately dispatched 1,500 loyal soldiers from West Point to the tense City of Brotherly Love, with Paterson acting as a senior commander.

Sampson, still an orderly for Paterson, left West Point several days after the general. With the war concluded and much of the army already furloughed, Sampson might have returned home. But she chose to follow Paterson and by the time she arrived at the army camp outside the city, the insurgents had surrendered and the mutiny was over. For her, however, another kind of disaster awaited.

Paterson spent three months in Philadelphia, and presided over the courts-martial of two sergeants and several privates accused of organizing

the Pennsylvania mutiny. The two sergeants were found guilty and sentenced to be hung, but were later pardoned by Congress.

Sampson may have served Paterson during her stay in Philadelphia, or moved about the city on her own, and at some point she contracted a fever. Smallpox, and measles were then ravaging the city, and likely the army camp, and she soon found herself a patient in a corpse-strewn hospital.

The Continental Army had established several hospitals in the city and at least one, managed by Army surgeon Dr. Barnabas Binney, was still operating in the summer of 1783. According to Sampson, Binney discovered her secret while she was there. He told no one except a nurse whom he ordered to take Sampson home with her and care for her there until she recovered. Recovering but still weak, Sampson was transferred to the Binney's home to be looked after until her strength returned. That Sampson suffered a "violent illness" while in Philadelphia which led to her "unmasking," was published in a newspaper article in 1784, and later confirmed by Munn, her drill sergeant.

It has been speculated that Binney alerted General Paterson to the discovery made regarding Sampson's "masquerade." According to this story,

Binney gave Sampson a letter to deliver to Paterson in which he revealed her true gender. Sampson correctly guessed the contents of the letter, and delivered it with great anxiety, fearing military punishment for the deception. However, Paterson not only assured her there would be no charges against her, but made immediate arrangements for her honorable discharge and return to her family.

It appears other officers among Paterson military "family," became aware of the unusual circumstances surrounding Private Shurtliff. With the war over, and with Sampson having proved her military worth in combat, and with faithful service, they were delighted in the deception.

By October 1783, Sampson was back at West Point, and discharged from the army on October 25, 1783, by Gen. Henry Knox. She was likely still at West Point on November 2 when the remainder of the Army was officially discharged and sent home.

Returning to Massachusetts, Sampson stayed for a while with her Uncle and Aunt Zebulon and Alice Waters in Stoughton, 18 miles west of Middleborough, until she felt ready to return to her mother, whom she feared would not forgive her abrupt departure.

Before long she went back to Middleborough and was gratefully reunited with her mother and community. In 1785 Sampson married Benjamin Gannett, Jr., a local farmer who had served briefly in the militia. The couple had several children, including a son who served as an officer during the War of 1812.

Life for a farming family in Massachusetts could be difficult, and in 1792 she successfully petitioned the state for back pay. In 1797, Sampson joined forces with newspaper publisher Herman Mann, who ghost wrote a "romanticized" account of Sampson's wartime years, titled *The Female Review: or, Memoirs of an American Young Lady*.

In 1802 Sampson began a year-long lecture tour, the first woman to do so in America, speaking about her military service, and dressing in her old uniform. Many of the stories she told during these lectures were more fanciful than truthful, likely to the delight of her audience, and along with Mann's book, some of these stories have muddled Sampson's true story. In his book, *Masquerade: The Life and Times of Deborah Sampson, Continental Soldier*, historian Alfred F. Young did much to separate fact from fancy.

Regardless, Sampson was able to prove her service to the new American government and is the only woman of the Revolution to receive a full military pension. None other than Paul Revere helped her secure a pension of \$4 per month, and in 1816 she received an additional amount of \$78 per year.

When the remarkable Deborah Sampson-Gannett died at 68 on April 29, 1827, she was matriarch of a flock of 12 grandchildren. ■

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Two hours into the Battle of Dranesville, as “men & horses fell around [him] like ten-pins,” General J. E. B. Stuart gave the order to fall back. | BY RYAN QUINT



CROSSFIRE *at the* CROSSROADS

When his pickets reported Federal troops up ahead in the small crossroads of Dranesville, Virginia, Brig. Gen. J.E.B. Stuart ordered the teamsters he was escorting to turn around and go back towards Centreville. Out on a foraging expedition with nearly 200 wagons, Stuart had been prepared to meet the enemy, but was not expecting it. The best defense, he reasoned, was to attack with his mixed brigade of infantry, 150 of his cavalry troopers and a four-gun battery.

Only 28, Stuart had already begun to establish his reputation for flamboyant style and bold tactics five months earlier with a daring charge against the Union 11th New York Zouaves in the Confederate victory at First Manassas. He shouted orders for his infantry to fan out into the woods on either side of the Centreville Road and advance towards the Union battle line along the Chain Bridge Road. Though there were fewer than 6,000 troops in total facing each other on December 20, 1861, both sides had something to prove. The Confederates were looking to rout the tenuous Union Army once again and the untested Pennsylvania Reserves wanted a chance to prove themselves in battle.

In 1818, Washington Drane built a hotel at the crossroads of the Leesburg and Georgetown Turnpikes at the western edge of Fairfax County. Halfway between the District of Columbia to the east and Leesburg to the west, travelers between the two could stay the night at Drane’s establishment for 12 cents and have breakfast for 25 cents. Seeing Drane’s success, others soon set up their own hotels and taverns along the route. Through the antebellum years, the small village might see as many as 50 large wagons stop over each night. The Virginia legislature honored Drane’s enterprising spirit in 1840 by christening the village Dranesville.

By the outbreak of the Civil War, Dranesville languished in the shadow of the railroad to the south through Herndon, which made the Washington to Leesburg trip much easier and faster. As the issue of slavery divided the country, Dranesville’s population had dwindled into the low hundreds, though an exact count doesn’t exist because the town wasn’t big enough to be its own census location.



Painting © John Paul Strain / www.johnpaulstrain.com



John Paul Strain's painting, *To Fairfax for Christmas*, depicts Confederate Brigadier General J.E.B. Stuart on the move after the Battle of Dranesville in 1861.



Library of Congress

Though small, Dranesville's citizenry drew political lines in the sand, and neighbors soon became enemies. On May 23, 1861, as part of the popular referendum to endorse secession, Dranesville acted as one of Fairfax County's polling locations. The local men voted 107 to 4 in favor of secession. One of those four, Howard Lasher, said that the secessionists told him "they would mark us." Another later told Federal officials that pro-secessionist members of the town formed an ad hoc militia and rode about, threatening Unionists and their families.

This small war within a war continued even as the main armies formed and marched towards each other at Manassas. After that battle, rumors spread that the pro-secessionist militia took body parts of dead Union soldiers as trophies.

Just a few miles north of Dranesville, on a parcel of land called Lowe's Island, the militia's war of words turned to action in the middle of September 1861. Bounded to the north by the Potomac River and circumnavigated by parts of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal, the island had become a popular place for Union soldiers camped across the river in Maryland to forage for food and supplies. Landowner McCarty Lowe,

with no one else to turn to, asked the secessionist militia to help defend his property. A shootout on September 16 left one U.S. soldier dead, another wounded, and one captured. The militia delighted in rummaging through the dead man's pockets and mockingly read his letters aloud in the center of town.

As the irregular warfare continued around Dranesville, some 10,000 Pennsylvanians crossed the Potomac River and set up their tents further to the east at a place christened Camp Pierpont nearly Langley, Virginia. Raised at the Keystone State's expense, the Pennsylvania Reserve Volunteer Corps was then mustered into Federal service. Three brigades of infantry, one cavalry regiment, and four batteries of artillery answered to Maj. Gen. George McCall, a veteran of both the Seminole and Mexican Wars. Alongside McCall, the Reserves contained future luminaries such as George Meade and John Reynolds as brigade commanders.

The Pennsylvanians soon learned the outlying area through a series of marches and patrols, often to Dranesville. "We found a number of houses abandoned by their occupants who had fled on our approach under the impression we were

Mamelukes and Bedouins coming to murder and destroy all we found," one officer in the division wrote. He also noted "houses that had been abandoned for some time, their inhabitants having been driven away by their neighbors on account of their Union sentiments." Soldiers sometimes traded words with Dranesville's residents, but the troublesome secessionist militia seemed to disappear whenever the Pennsylvanians showed up in force. Aside from some desultory, long-range skirmishing, the Federals never came into contact with regular Confederate forces.

Three enslaved people escaped from Dranesville in late November and walked 11 miles to a Union camp. They told the story of the ambush at Lowe's Island and, more importantly to Union officials, told the identities of those who had done the shooting. Those names were sent to Washington, D.C., and ultimately, to the desk of the army's commander, George McClellan.

Incensed at what he perceived to be an unconscionable murder of his soldiers at the hands of irregulars who hid in the night, McClellan ordered a detachment to Dranesville to arrest the men. In a pre-dawn raid, the 1st Pennsylvania Cavalry apprehended nearly a dozen of Dranesville's

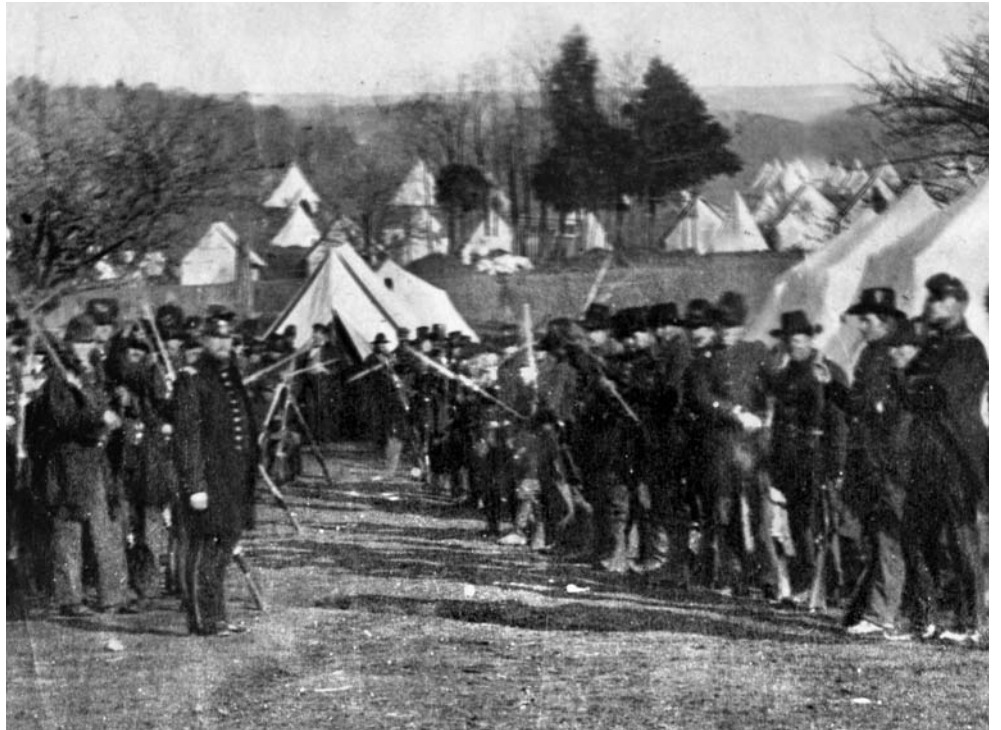
men, bringing them back in chains to the Old Capitol Prison.

The Pennsylvania Reserves went back to Dranesville at least twice more, bringing empty wagons to fill with forage for Camp Pierpont. As winter settled in, both sides knew they would need forage for their men and horses to last the cold. Dranesville's location in no man's land, made foraging expeditions lucrative for both armies.

Amidst this back and forth, a newly minted brigadier general arrived in the Pennsylvanians' camp in late November. A Marylander by birth, Edward O. C. Ord's career since his graduation from the Military Academy in 1839 had been mundane. By 1861, he was only a captain, a victim of the army's glacial promotion system in the antebellum years. Posted in far-off Washington Territory when war broke out, Ord pulled some strings in the Adjutant General's office for a general's star and reassignment to Northern Virginia. At Camp Pierpont, Ord assumed command of the Pennsylvania Reserves' Third Brigade.

Ord was a disciplinarian who demanded much of his command. One soldier wrote home after a review of the brigade that, "Last Sunday he inspected the regiments of the Third Brigade and 'came down' very hard on captains of companies whose men had the least bit of dust or tarnish on their muskets." Another soldier noted that Ord "looks just like a Russian Marshal with his fierce Mustachios and beard." But Ord also had a softer side. On a particularly cold night, one of Ord's staff officers remembered the general "got up quietly, got a pair of blankets and covered me with them and tucked them around me as carefully as if I had been his child."

On December 19, McCall ordered Ord to move to Dranesville the next morning on a twofold mission: First, he was to ensure the safety of Unionists in the Dranesville area persecuted by Confederate forces. Second, with about 40 wagons, his men were to gather badly needed forage and supplies near the town. To protect the wagons, Ord was to take his full brigade, plus an artillery battery and a regiment of cavalry. McCall also threw in the 1st Pennsylvania Rifles (informally known as the Bucktails) for some additional firepower. All told, Ord's column would number close to 4,500 men. That evening, as other men in the division played football, Ord got his brigade together and issued commands: "This Brigade will march tomorrow morning at 6 O'clock a.m. armed and equipped with forty (40) rounds of ammunition and one day's rations, cooked, canteens filled with coffee or tea, toward Dranesville." However, it was not just the Federals who were preparing for a morning march to Dranesville.



J. Berkley Green Collection of the Herndon Historical Society



ABOVE: The Dranesville Hotel, shown here in the late 19th or early 20th century, was one of five taverns built after Washington Drane built his hotel at the crossroads of the Leesburg and Georgetown Turnpikes in 1823. Originally called the Jackson-Jenkins, it is the only one still standing and has been restored as the Dranesville Tavern. In the 1960s the building was moved 130 feet for the widening of Route 7. **TOP:** Unidentified Federal troops in one of several Union camps near Langley, Virginia, in the winter of 1861-62. **OPPOSITE:** Union troops drill on a snow-dusted parade ground near Washington, D.C., in the winter of 1861-62.

For the past few months, J. E. B. Stuart had been in charge of the "Advance Outposts" of Confederate forces in Northern Virginia. Though only 28, his leadership during the near-constant skirmishing in the days after Manassas was

noticed by his superiors. None of these skirmishes were large, but Stuart kept his cool and earned his brigadier general's star in September. The action slowed as winter set in, but Stuart still champed at the bit to get at the Federals. Nominally in



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command of the army's cavalry brigade, Stuart's makeup of advanced outposts fluctuated frequently as units rotated in and out of service on the front line.

On December 19, Stuart rode towards Centreville to assemble an expedition that would march to Dranesville the next day and gather the forage that so far had only been going into U.S. wagons. His command of four infantry regiments, a battery of artillery, and about 150 cavalry troopers was drawn from various units already assigned to picket duty. The order to prepare came late in the day. As one soldier from the 6th South Carolina scribbled, "We have just got orders to be ready to march tomorrow morning at 5 o'clock with one day's rations." He presciently added, "I suppose as we report to Genl. Stewart [sic], the commander of the outposts, we are going out on a scout & may have a brush with the Yankees." All in, Stuart would lead about 2,500 men to Dranesville.

Before the sun rose, Stuart's column began its 16-mile march from Centreville to Dranesville. Temperatures hovered near freezing, but the Confederates were in high spirits. One soldier remembered "it looked like a holiday or a frolic ahead." As the wagons rolled over icy roads, they cracked and ripped the quiet morning, awakening

"dogs that barked and howled by turns."

The Pennsylvanians set out from Camp Pierpont a little later. The Federals were also in high spirits, with some riding in the empty forage wagons, singing loudly about hanging "Jeff Davis on a sour apple tree" until Ord hushed them.

As they neared Dranesville, Ord had his men begin picking up supplies. To guard the wagons, he ordered most of the 10th Pennsylvania Reserves to stay behind, taking only a few of the regiment's companies into town.

Neither side was aware of the other as they approached Dranesville. Ord's men followed the Leesburg & Georgetown Pike; Stuart approached via the Centreville Road to the south. The Pennsylvanians reached town first, and Ord instructed his men to fan out and secure the roads. The 1st Pennsylvania Rifles and the 9th Pennsylvania Reserves, each deployed a company of skirmishers in the thick woods south of town.

The two companies of Pennsylvanian skirmishers were catching their breaths when one spotted the Confederates in the distance. "There they come!" one shouted. Many of the Federals froze, entranced by their first sight of enemy troops. "We forgot that the Boys in Gray could also deploy as skirmishers until zip—zip! Zip! Zip!

The rifle balls came in upon us from both flanks," another admitted later. Members of the 9th Pennsylvania's Company A, armed with Sharps Rifles, began to return fire while doggedly falling back to their main lines.

As the Federal sharpshooters fell back, Ord placed the rest of his brigade. On the outskirts of town, atop a plateau known to the locals as Drane's Hill, Ord put the battery of Capt. Hezekiah Easton's 1st Pennsylvania Light Artillery. The gunners jumped to their work and began to fire. Ord, who taught gunnery at Fort Monroe before the war, somewhat micromanaged the battery, shouting out orders to fire with shells. A staff officer remembered that with Ord's Maryland accent, it sounded like "Load with shall."

Ord sent Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Kane and the 1st Pennsylvania Rifles over to the Thornton House across the turnpike at the base of Drane's Hill with orders to turn the two-story brick structure into an impromptu fort. Bucktails who couldn't fit in the house lay down beside it as Confederate fire began to crack overhead. To the left of the Bucktails came what was left of the 10th Pennsylvania Reserves—the majority of the regiment had stayed behind with the wagons. The 6th and 9th Pennsylvania Reserves fell into line

BELOW: Lieutenant Lucius Gibson Rees of the Sumter Flying Georgia Light Artillery. With heavy pine woods on either side of the Centerville Road, Rees and his crew were exposed and took heavy casualties from Ord's Union artillery. **RIGHT:** An unidentified soldier from Company E, known as the Lynchburg Rifles, part of the 11th Virginia Infantry in 1861. He carries a Model 1841 "Mississippi" rifle, a Bowie knife, revolver, knapsack, bed roll, cartridge box and militia style canteen. **OPPOSITE:** With both Union and Confederate forces foraging in the area, light skirmishes around the village of Dranesville were always a risk. This engraving from *Leslie's Illustrated History of the Civil War* shows Union pickets in the bushes firing on Confederates near Munson's Hill in Northern Virginia.



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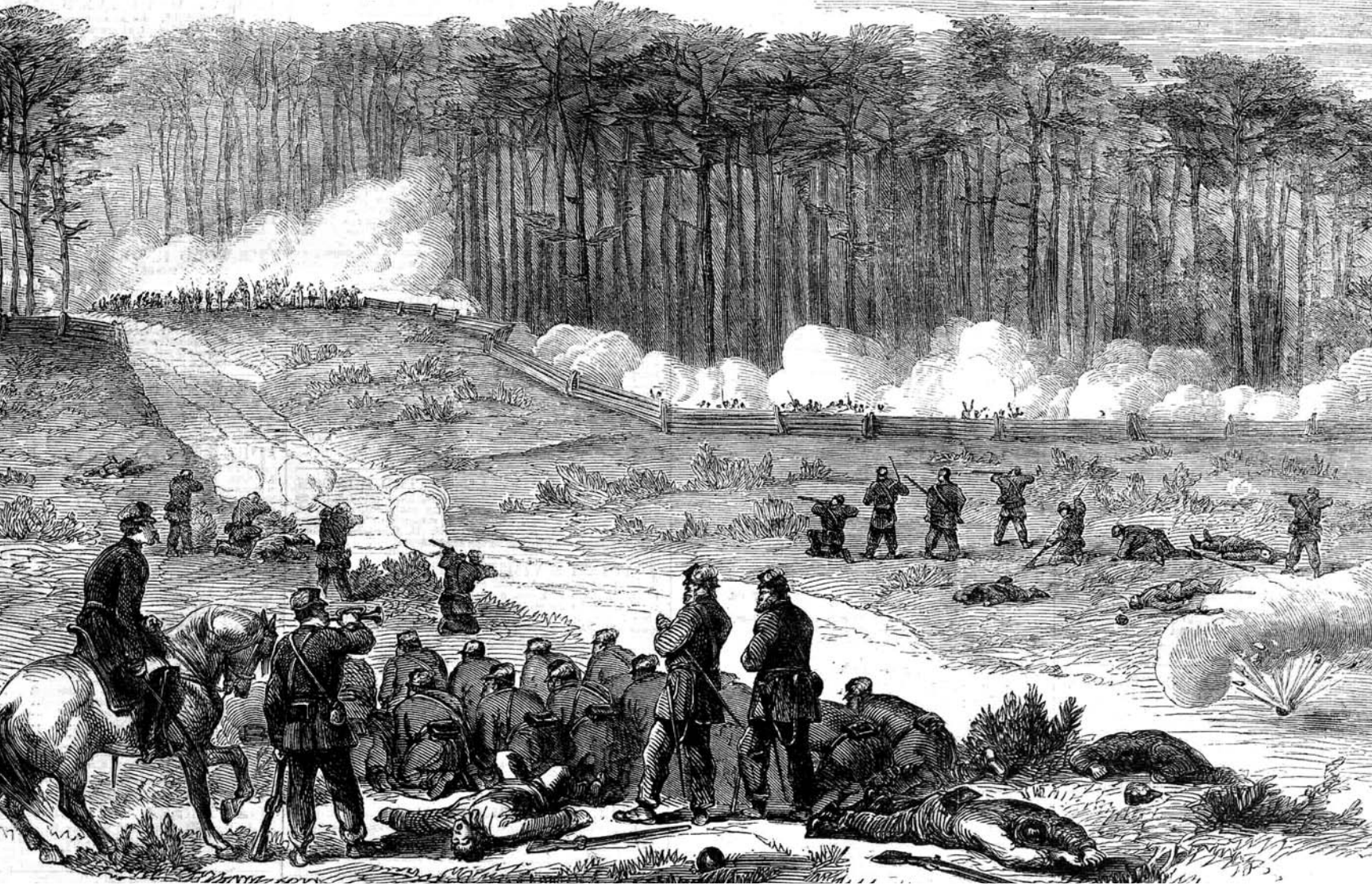
respectively to the right of the Thornton House. Ord put the 12th Pennsylvania Reserves and 1st Pennsylvania Cavalry on the backslope of Drane's Hill in reserve.

On the other side, Stuart realized he had a problem on his hands. Having lost the race to Dranesville, he now had some 200 wagons dangerously close to enemy lines. He ordered the teamsters to turn around and head back towards Manassas. To give them time to do so, Stuart felt the best way to hold off the Federals was to attack them. Commanding a sizable force of combined arms for the first time in his young career, Stuart

shouted orders for his infantry to fan out and advance towards the Union battle line.

Thick pine forests on both sides of the Centerville Road slowed Stuart's movement and hampered communication between units. Stuart's four guns from the Sumter Flying Artillery could not maneuver in the woods, so Capt. Allan Cutts was forced to deploy them in the road—an inviting target to Easton's battery less than a mile away.

The results were quickly catastrophic as Easton's artillerists dropped shells and solid shot around the Confederate gunners. "Our men began to fall rapidly," a Confederate wrote. One



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Union skirmishers, including members of the Pennsylvania Reserves wearing bucktails—proclaiming their ability as marksmen—engage with Confederates in the opening shots of the Battle of Dranesville on December 20, 1861, in this sketch from the *London Illustrated News*.

of Cutts's caissons exploded, killing some of the troops around it. A moment later, a solid shot swept in and beheaded two Confederate gunners. The visceral display of gore shocked onlookers, many of them experiencing combat for the first time. After the battle, the Confederates found the cannon "bespattered with the brains and blood of an artilleryman." In just a matter of moments, the Confederate artillery had essentially been knocked out of action and would have no impact on the rest of the battle.

While Easton's Pennsylvanians battered Cutts' Georgians, the 11th Virginia Infantry, led by Col. Samuel Garland, moved obliquely to the right through the pines. Garland's skirmishers had been the first Confederates to make contact with Ord's men, but now these same soldiers wandered too far into the confusing pine trees. Trying to reconnect his regiment, Garland in turn extended to the right, creating a gap in Stuart's line. Garland's men came under fire from Pennsylvanians along the Leesburg & Alexandria Turnpike and from Kane's riflemen in the Thornton House. Many

of the Virginians hesitated to return fire because of their proximity to Easton's battery. "They could have slaughtered every one of us with canister if we had shown ourselves," one Virginian wrote. Another remembered that with enough Union soldiers to their front, "it seemed to me that the whole earth looked blue."

While Garland's 11th Virginia deployed to the right, the 10th Alabama, commanded by Col. John Forney, followed them. The Alabamians moved through the pines and came to a clearing around the homestead of Robert Coleman. Unlike their Virginian comrades who stopped and went to ground, the Alabamians charged ahead into the clearing, as Stuart wrote in his official report, "with a shout in a shower of bullets."

A torrent of fire from hundreds of rifles and Easton's guns swept through the 10th Alabama, devastating its command staff. Colonel Forney went down with a shattered arm. Lt. Col. James Martin, a well-respected judge back in Talladega County who had turned down a leave of absence to be present for the battle, was fatally shot

through the chest. Capt. William Forney, brother of Colonel Forney and the commander of the 10th's Company G, was shot in the calf. "The battle waxed warm and fierce, the missiles of death flew thick and fast and had no respect for persons with whom they came in contact," a soldier in the 10th jotted in his diary.

As the 10th Alabama charged across their yard, the Coleman family hid in their basement where two cannonballs passed through. After the battle, they investigated the rest of the house and Ann Coleman later petitioned for a list of damages: "eleven cannon balls shot through the house and two shells exploded. House was badly damaged; the furniture almost destroyed."

While the 10th Alabama and 11th Virginia struggled to the right of the Centreville Road, Stuart simultaneously ordered the 6th South Carolina Infantry to begin moving to the left. They were soon stymied by the thick pines and a heavy fire to their front. A soldier wrote to his father, "you couldn't see 50 yards ahead of you."

Problems quickly exacerbated as the 1st Ken-

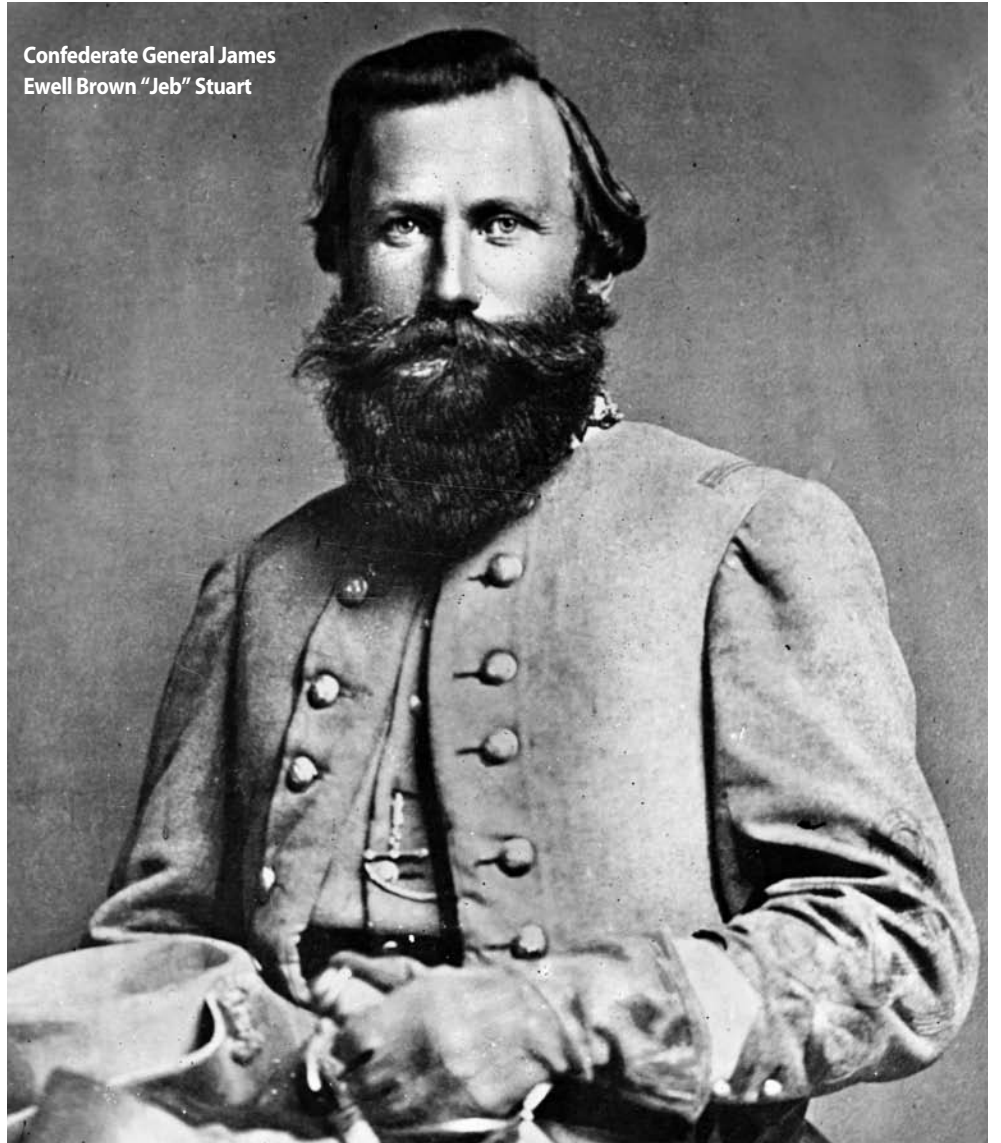
tucky Infantry came up behind the Carolinians. In the confusion of the pines, the Kentuckians thought the forces in front of them to be Federals. Major Thomas Woodward, from the 6th South Carolina, remembered looking behind him and “saw the Kentuckians in the kneeling position, with their rifles well levelled on us.” Before he could react, the Kentuckians let loose a volley that killed and wounded at least four. Some of the Carolinians shot back, continuing the friendly fire fiasco. Cooler heads soon prevailed, the 1st Kentucky moved to the left out from behind the Carolinians, and the Confederate line advanced.

With dogged tenacity the Carolinians pushed closer to the Thornton House, but the Federals never let up. Lt. John Bratton of the 6th South Carolina wrote to his wife, “The order was given to fall to the ground.” But it did not help the regiment very much as casualties continued to mount. Lieutenant Bratton crawled to his dying cousin but could do nothing as the 17-year old boy bled to death amongst the pines. Carrying the Confederate battle flag into combat for the first time in the war, the regiment’s color bearer received a nasty wound to the wrist, forcing him to relinquish the standard. Capt. Obadiah Harden took it up, but was mortally wounded, dying on New Year’s Day. Harden’s younger brother Thomas was also killed in the maelstrom.

Stuart’s Confederates did not have a monopoly on problems. The colonel of the 6th Pennsylvania Reserves had been forced to stay behind at Camp Pierpont due to illness. In his place, Lt. Colonel William Penrose led the regiment at Dranesville. Penrose, who had no military training, froze as the shooting began. One soldier wrote that Penrose “seemed to forget that he was an officer, and gave no commands whatever.” In that moment, the regiment’s adjutant, Henry McKean, stepped in and began to lead, solving what could have been a dire command crisis. General Ord, getting word of what was occurring, sent Lt. Col. Kane to command both the Bucktails and the 6th. Some other officers in the 6th Reserves got involved too—Lt. Benjamin Ashenfelter, for example, picked up a “musket and went to work with that,” he wrote his parents.

Further to the right, the 9th Pennsylvania Reserves came onto line. Their colonel, Conrad Jackson, had left his Quaker pacifist tenets behind to fight for the Union. But he likewise had no formal military training, and as the 1st Kentucky approached his line, Jackson’s first impression was that they were Union soldiers. Captain Robert Galway, one of Jackson’s company commanders, beseeched the colonel that the incoming soldiers were the enemy, but Jackson refused to give the order to open fire. The Kentuckians got the drop on the Pennsylvanians, opening fire and knocking

Confederate General James
Ewell Brown “Jeb” Stuart



Federal Major General Edward Otho Cresap Ord



Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Leiper Kane



Journal Universel

men out of line, including Capt. Galway, who went down with a bullet in his leg. Both sides now began to exchange volleys “at pistol range,” one member of the 9th Reserves guessed. Another soldier of the regiment wrote home “the bullets came like hail stones over our heads.”

It had been nearly two hours since the opposing sides came into contact. Stuart, still giving orders in the midst of the Centreville Road, wrote home, “Men & horses fell around me like ten-pins.” Realizing that his wagons had safely retreated and he could make no more headway against the Federal line, Stuart issued orders for his men to start falling back.

Seeing the Confederates retreat, Ord demanded that his men pursue, but did not get very far. Exhausted from the day’s events and their adrenaline waning, their half-hearted counter-attack quickly lost steam. What momentum they did have quickly evaporated when they ran into a cavalry screen Stuart set up to cover his withdrawal. “The enemy came near enough to fire upon them once,” a cavalry officer wrote. The Battle of Dranesville was over.

The two-hour engagement cost Stuart 195

casualties, 65 of which were killed on the battlefield. Ord’s force suffered 73 losses, including 10 killed in action.

Confederate forces fell back a couple of miles to the Frying Pan Church where surgeons established a temporary field hospital there to care for the wounded.

Meanwhile, Ord’s men policed the battlefield and cared for their fallen. They gathered mementoes and collected discarded weapons. Teetering on exhaustion, the soldiers returned to Camp Pierpont where those who missed the battle interrogated their comrades and gawked at the souvenirs. “Everything of account had been taken such as revolvers & Southern money or script & officers trappings, swords, &c,” one veteran wrote.

The next morning Stuart returned with more troops, hoping to entice the Federals to a rematch and to gather his dead. Union soldiers did not take the bait. Stuart’s column returned to Centreville and began the sad duty of burying the corpses. One Confederate noted that the dead were piled into the wagons “like so many dead hogs.” Some of the dead were sent home, and an Alabama newspaper commented upon their

arrival, “Christmas week has been a sad week in this part of the State.”

While funerals continued, the fallout of the battle began to take hold. Northern newspapers, hoping desperately for good news after a horrible 1861 in Virginia, latched onto the victory at Dranesville. “A splendid little affair,” crowed the *New York Herald*, while the *New York Times* lauded Dranesville and said it “gives great elation to all classes here.” Horace Greeley, editor of the *New York Tribune*, touched on the battle’s importance best when he commented that the battle “diffused an immense exhilaration throughout the Union ranks.” He continued, “It was a fitting and conclusive answer to every open assertion or whispered insinuation impeaching the courage or the steadiness of our raw Northern volunteers.”

Ord was feted as a hero. He earned a promotion to major general of volunteers, and the regiments under his command were given authorization to inscribe, in gold lettering, Dranesville, on their battle flags.

Meanwhile, Stuart felt the full brunt of the defeat. “Although our men are willing to ‘do or die,’ when called upon, I cannot see that any gen-

eral should lose fifty or sixty men, simply from his own carelessness in not providing against a surprise,” one Tennessee newspaper printed. An Alabama newspaper piled on when its editors wrote that Stuart “has evidently risen to a post above his merit, and is but an additional instance of the unfortunate appointments that have come from the government at Richmond.” Officers who commanded the troops that Stuart had temporary control over at Dranesville were irate at the ways they perceived he threw them away needlessly. Gen. Cadmus Wilcox of Alabama complained to a friend that “By God sir Gen. S[tuart] has no wright [sic] to lead my people into Battle.”

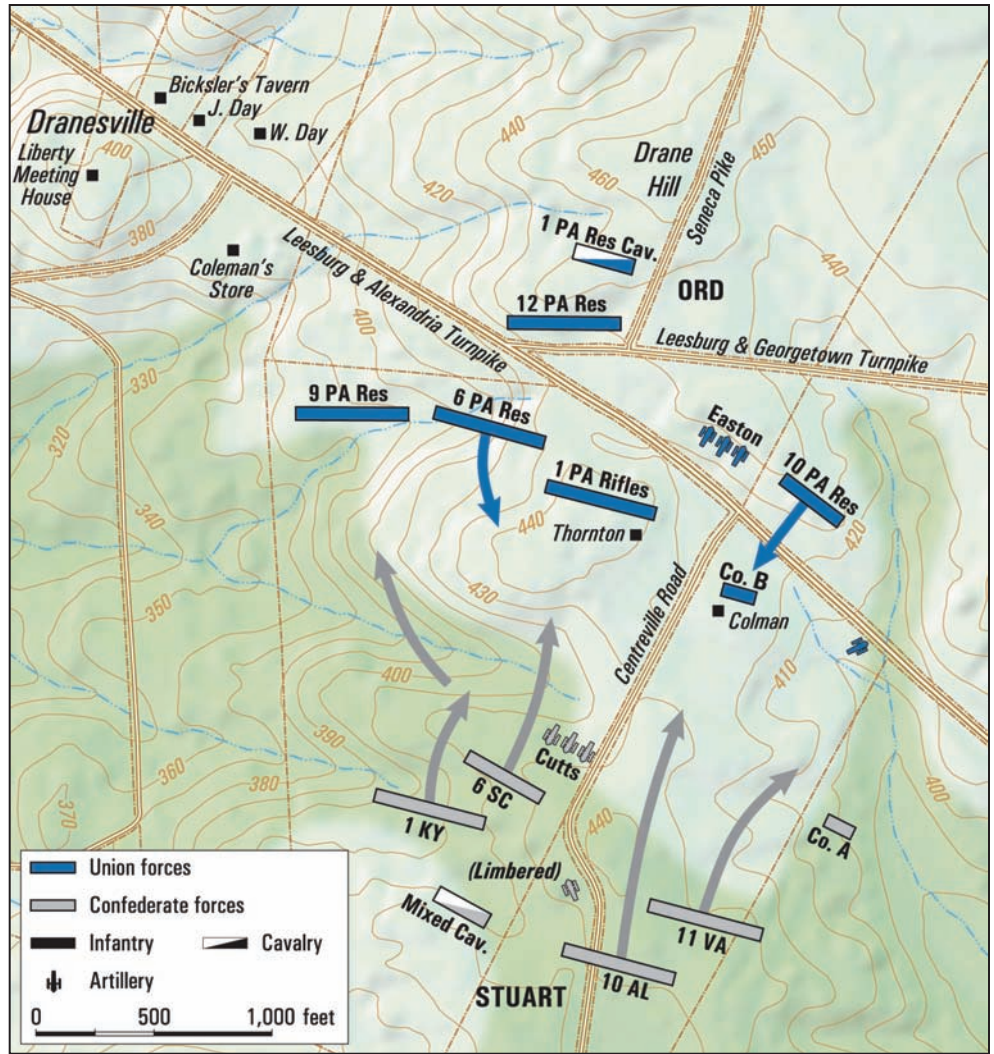
The war moved on, and in time Stuart weathered the storm. He in turn became a hero of the Confederacy with his famed ride around the Army of the Potomac during the Peninsula Campaign. Other opportunities to command combined arms would come to him, perhaps most famously in 1863, when he took over for the wounded “Stonewall” Jackson at Chancellorsville. His death in May 1864 left many throughout the South heartbroken, his defeat at Dranesville long forgotten.

Ord commanded troops at the division, corps, and army level throughout the war. When Lee surrendered at Appomattox, Ord sat in the corner of the McLean House, having risen to lead the Army of the James. He died in 1883 and was buried with honors at Arlington National Cemetery.

The soldiers he commanded at Dranesville never forgot their success. “A proud lot of boys we were,” one veteran remembered. Every year the soldiers held a reunion to remember their service. These were men who fought on the Peninsula, and the grueling Seven Days; Second Manassas and Antietam’s bloody Cornfield; Fredericksburg and in the Valley of Death at Gettysburg; the confusion of the Wilderness and finally back home. They had stories to fill a thousand lifetimes. And yet every year, to mark their service, the hardy Pennsylvania Reserves convened on the anniversary of Dranesville, to remember their actions on Dec. 20, 1861.

Others who may have wanted to forget Dranesville could not. Robert Galway, the officer in the 9th Pennsylvania who exhorted his regiment’s commanding officer to open fire, was shot badly in the leg. To deal with the pain, he turned to morphine, but soon became addicted to the opiate. Galway died in 1864 from “disease of the brain.”

The armies marched through Dranesville throughout the war, campaigning into Maryland, back into Virginia, and once more into Pennsylvania. Townspeople accused of disloyalty and murdering Union soldiers in 1861 were released in 1862 due to a lack of evidence and went about their lives. No park commemorates one of the Union’s



ABOVE: In addition to the Battle of Dranesville, shots were exchanged in six skirmishes during the Civil War as troops from both armies passed frequently through the strategically located crossroads. Though its residents overwhelmingly supported the Confederacy, it mattered little to them which side was taking away their food and forage for their animals. On December 20, 1861, Confederate Gen. J. E. B Stuart and his foraging party approached the town from the south on the Centerville Road only to find Union troops already in position, with artillery on the high ground. **OPPOSITE:** Overlooking the Coleman house on the left and the Thornton House (far right edge), Federal artillery fires towards the distant Confederate forces from atop Drane’s Hill as Union infantry maneuvers into place.

first battlefield victories of the war, and now instead the whole area sits under asphalt, an obscured byproduct of Northern Virginia’s urban sprawl.

But memories endure, and Draneville’s place as a small battle with a big impact remains. In the midst of the massive battles of the Civil War with tens of thousands of casualties, it can be easy to overlook the smaller actions like Dranesville. To the soldiers who fought and died there, however, Dranesville was just as cataclysmic as Antietam or Gettysburg. To remember them, each year, the congregation of the Dranesville Church of the Brethren gather atop Drane’s Hill. Candles sit atop a small table, flickering and their flames casting shadows on the wall. The congregation reads

each name of a fallen soldier at Dranesville, and as they do, the candles are extinguished, one by one, until just darkness remains. In the pitch black, the true magnitude of Dranesville is truly, and viscerally, felt. ■

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S. Rava'03

True to their word, the Spartans stood against the Great King's Persian army at Thermopylae.

Defending THE PASS

BY LUDWIG HEINRICH DYCK

Looking out over the parapet of a stronghold erected on the Doricus, the vast Thracian plain and beach on the Aegean coast, Xerxes beheld an ocean of humanity assembled from 46 different peoples on the plain below.

It was the perfect place for the 38-year-old Persian “King of Kings” (r. 485-465 BCE) to assemble and review his troops—as well as intimidate the Greeks upon whom he was about to unleash this massive army.

There were rows of blue-black bearded Assyrians adorned in brass helmets, wearing linen cuirasses and wielding iron knotted clubs, lances, and daggers. Bactrian archers with bows of cane stood beside squat Scythians in trousers and pointed hats, armed with deadly composite bows and “sagaris” battle-axes. There were dusky Indian charioteers in cotton, Caspians in goatskin, Colchians behind shields of cow skin, and Saragian horsemen with lassos. The brightly adorned Thracians wore fox skin caps on their heads. Zeira, long robes, shrouded Arabian archers on camels. Wildest of all were the ebony Ethiopians, whose straight, black hair fell from beneath headdresses of horses’ scalps, ears, and manes. In contrast, those of western Ethiopia were curly haired. They draped themselves in leopard and lion skins and carried reed arrows tipped with sharpened stones like those of an earlier age. Their six-foot bows were made from the stems of palm leaves and their spearheads were of antelope horn.

Persian, Mede, and Kissian infantry and cavalry provided the backbone of Xerxes’ army. Their officers and nobles glittered all over in golden adornments. Litters bearing concubines, a throng of servants, and beasts of burden followed in their wake. Garlands ringed the heads of the “Immortals,” Xerxes’ elite troops, so named because they eternally numbered 10,000, their ranks quickly refilling if any of them perished.



ABOVE: This bronze figure of a Spartan warrior dating from the 6th century BCE is missing its *doru* (spear) in the right hand and the round *aspis* (shield) in the left. **OPPOSITE:** This painting by Giuseppe Rava shows the king of the ancient Greek city-state of Sparta, Leonidas (center), leading from the front against the army of the Persian King Xerxes at Thermopylae in 480 BCE. His corinthian helmet includes a horse hair plume placed sideways, from ear to ear, to distinguish officers from the men.

If Xerxes looked from the plain to the sea, he could see that beyond his citadel the coastline gave way to a beach that wound past Sale, the city of the Samothracians, all the way to the Serrheum promontory. Arrayed along the beach was Xerxes' massive armada of Egyptian, Phoenician, Cypriot, Cilician, Pamphylian, Lycian, Caranin, and subject Greek ships that always accompanied his land army. There were warships and smaller ships, each with a crew of 80 to 200 men who were as variedly equipped as the land army. Some of the ships were hauled ashore for refitting.

Altogether, Herodotus, the principal source for the period, claimed that Xerxes commanded some 1,700,000 infantry, 80,000 cavalry and that his whole host, including ship crews, servants, and camp followers, numbered over five million with 1,207 warships and 3,000 smaller vessels. Logistically this number is, of course, completely impossible, a product of Greek propaganda. Modern estimates range widely but it is reasonable to assume that there were over 150,000 soldiers and marines and about 800 triremes. Nevertheless, it was the greatest military and political might the ancient world had ever seen, an army that had taken four years to marshal. Every nation and every tribe from an empire at its zenith had been required to send warriors led by their own kings and princes.

Woe to those that failed to bow to the will of Xerxes, for the Great King's wrath was as terrible as his might. In the autumn of 481 BCE, the previous year, Pythius, the richest man in the Persian Empire, entertained the King and his whole army. Xerxes was so pleased that he bestowed upon Pythius 7,000 darics, so that the latter's wealth would amount to a full four million. The following spring, in light of Xerxes' generous gesture, Pythius dared to ask for his eldest son to be spared from the coming war against the Greeks. Furious at the audacity of a mere "slave," Xerxes ordered Pythius's son to be cut into two pieces. The "pieces" were displayed on either side of the gate of Sardis, in full sight of Xerxes' army setting forth on their march to the Hellespont strait (the Dardanelles). According to legend, the sun darkened with the army's passing.

Not even the elements were safe from Xerxes' anger. A tempest destroyed two gargantuan bridges that his Egyptian and Phoenician engineers had thrown across the narrow Hellespont. The engineers paid for their ill luck with their heads. On Xerxes' order the Hellespont itself was punished by 300 lashes accompanied by the exclamation, "O bitter water, our lord lays this punishment upon you, for having done him wrong, who never did wrong to you. King Xerxes will cross you, whether you will or not."

It seemed that even the waters of the Helles-

pont acknowledged the will of Xerxes. Under the direction of a Greek engineer, two lines of over 300 ships each were moored over the strait to provide the foundation of two new bridges, complete with a road of brushwood, wood, and earth and side palisades. From an ivory throne, Xerxes

watched for two days as his army crossed from Asia Minor into Greece. Supposedly a wide-eyed local man exclaimed, "Why, O Zeus, do you, in the likeness of a Persian man, and with the name of Xerxes instead of your own, lead the whole race of mankind to the destruction of Greece?"

Wikimedia



ABOVE: According to the Greek historian Herodotus, Xerxes the Great ordered his priests to "punish" the sea with 300 lashes after a storm destroyed the flax and papyrus cables of a 1,300-yard pontoon bridge across the Dardanelles Strait, known as the Hellespont in classical antiquity, separating Asia from Europe. He also had the engineer overseeing the project beheaded. **OPPOSITE:** Persian "King of Kings" Xerxes I watches from his travelling throne as his army prepares to invade Greece by crossing the Hellespont on a 1,300-yard pontoon bridge connected and anchored with flax and papyrus cables. This was the second such bridge built over the strait after a storm destroyed the first one. His army was so large it was said to have taken seven days and nights to make the crossing.



Art Archive

The answer, in part, lay 10 years in the past, when Xerxes' late father, King Darius, came to Greece to punish Athens for aiding rebellious Greek cities in Asia Minor. At Marathon, however, Athens humbled Darius's army. Although it went against Xerxes' own initial judgment, his warmongering cousin Mardonius, the conqueror of Thrace and Macedonia, prodded him to avenge his father's humiliation and to extend his sway into Greek Europe.

Mardonius's council bore fruit when Xerxes, a devout Zoroastrian, experienced a series of visions, including a godly identity telling him to make war on Greece. In another, Xerxes was crowned with an olive branch. Boughs spread out from the branch and covered the whole earth; then suddenly the garland, as it lay upon his brow, vanished.

The end of the dream implies that, at a time when Xerxes' complete victory appeared certain, he would abruptly lose it all. The dreams are fanciful reading but, like many other anecdotes, could be an invention of Herodotus to enliven his story. On the other hand, the ancient world was ripe with superstitions, oracles, and soothsayers so Xerxes might well have been so inspired.

Xerxes became convinced that it was his divine

right to conquer the world. Inscribed at Persepolis were the words: "A great god is Ahura Mazda, who created this earth, who created man, who created peace for man; who made Xerxes king, one king of many, one lord of many." Another of Xerxes' inscriptions relates, "All I did, I did with the will of Ahura Mazda."

Xerxes was not the only one who invoked supernatural aid. Within the temple of the god Apollo at Delphi, the Pythia, the priestess of the most famed oracle in all of Greece, sat upon a tripod. Beside her grew a laurel tree, sacred to Apollo. Below her yawned a symbolic chasm. Chewing a laurel leaf, the Pythia drifted into a trance, her utterings recorded by priests in prose or verse. After she was done they informed a Spartan delegation awaiting her prophecy in an outer chamber.

"Oh! Ye men who dwell in the streets of broad Lacedaemon,

Either your glorious town shall be sacked by the Children of Perseus

Or, in exchange, must all through the whole Laconian country

Mourn for the loss of a king, descendant of great Heracles.

He cannot be withstood by the courage of bulls or lions,

Strive as they may; he is mighty as Zeus; there is naught that shall stay him,

Till he have got for his prey your king, or your glorious city."

Sparta, also known as Lacedaemon, was the chief city of Laconia, the southernmost region of Greece's prominent Peloponnesus peninsula. The Isthmus of Corinth connected the Peloponnesus to the eastern mainland. Just on the other side rose Athens.

Sparta and Athens were the only two Greek city-states that did not receive Persian heralds demanding earth and water, the symbolic tokens of submission. They would not have given them anyway, for the Greeks could not and would never accept "one king of many," not even from their own people, much less from the Persians whom they considered to be a race of "barbarians."

The first seeds of Panhellenism germinated during the previous Persian invasion. Under the leadership of Sparta and Athens they blossomed into the Synedriion of Probuloi or the Congress of Representatives, held at the Isthmus of Corinth in the autumn of 481. Long-standing feuds

between Greek city-states were buried as delegates from 31 city-states met to forge a Panhellenic policy against the Persian invader.

The congress was under the presidency of Sparta, already the leader of a large number of Peloponnesian cities. Furthermore, it was to the dual monarchy of Sparta that the leadership of both the army and the navy was nearly unanimously entrusted. The only major opposition came from Athens. Unlike Sparta, which was primarily a land-based power, Athens easily boasted the largest navy within the confederation and naturally wished to command this combat arm. However, when petty jealousy of the Athenian democracy threatened disunity, Athens graciously relinquished her claim.

The leader of the army would be Leonidas, one of the dual Spartan kings, who traced his lineage back to Heracles. Eurybiadas, a Spartan who curiously was not a member of either of the royal families, presided over the navy.

Not all the Greek states joined the confederation. Absent were Argos, Sparta's old rival, and the isolated island cities of Crete, Corcyra, and Syra-

cuse. Also abstaining was the wild northeastern region of Thessaly and a number of smaller northern states to her south. Since Xerxes would march west from Thrace and then through his vassal kingdom of Macedon, Thessaly would be the first free Greek realm to feel the tramp of the Persian colossus. With no concrete help forthcoming from the southern Greeks, and many of her hill tribes won over by Persian agents, Thessaly could not afford to incur the Great King's wrath by openly supporting the Greek confederation.

The Greeks probably realized from the beginning that their chances of defeating the Persians in an open land battle were slim. There was not only the matter of greater Persian numbers, but the excellent Persian cavalry could easily outflank the Greek hoplite heavy infantry. The only formidable Greek cavalry was that of Thessaly, but the confederation had abandoned Thessaly. Besides, the Persian horsemen outmatched the Thessalian cavalry.

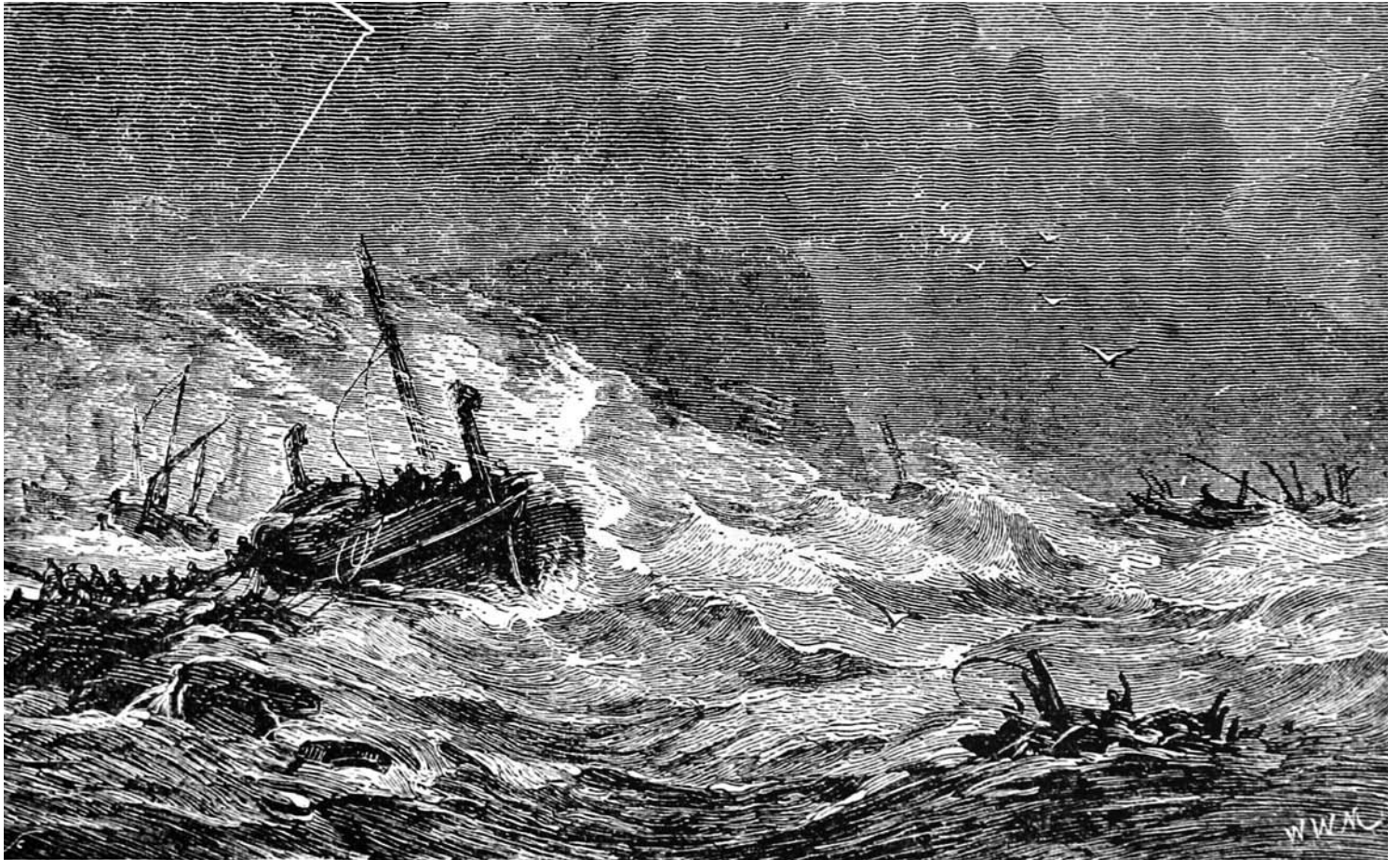
Because the Greek navy at least enjoyed a qualitative advantage, the only hope was a decisive sea battle. So the Greek plan developed that a crack

corps of hoplites would hold the pass of Thermopylae, the gateway to central and southern Greece. Their mission would be to forestall the Persian land advance long enough for the Persian navy to attempt an outflanking maneuver in the adjacent Euboean channel. Blocking them at the mouth of the channel, in the Malian Gulf, would be the Greek navy.

It was Athens that pushed for this strategy because she did not wish to see the Persian army pour into central Greece and up to the gates of her city. Sparta, on the other hand, was too introverted to look beyond the defense of her own peninsula. She preferred a stand on the Isthmus of Corinth with the Greek navy stationed in the adjacent straits of Salamis. But because Sparta depended on the help of the Athenian navy, she reluctantly agreed on the defense of Thermopylae.

Sparta's hesitation was reflected in her committing a mere 300 of her several thousand "Spartiatai" hoplites to Thermopylae's defense. They were likely accompanied by an additional 900 lighter-armed "helot" hoplites. The difference between a Spartiatai and a helot was that the Spar-

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ABOVE: Even after storms off the coast of Greece ravaged the fleet of Xerxes the Great for three days, the Persian navy still had more ships than the Greeks. **OPPOSITE:** Detail from a processional frieze on the east side of the Apadana Palace, Persepolis, Iran, c.518-465 BCE. This sculpture in the ruins of Xerxes' palace shows Persian and Mede soldiers in traditional dress. The army of Xerxes was composed of soldiers from many nationalities.



Aneta Ribarska/wikimedia

tiatai was the military ruling class of Sparta, descended from Dorian conquerors, while the helot was the more numerous indigenous, bottom-caste farmer-serfs. Although the helots provided a handy base for additional recruits, they constantly threatened to revolt against their brutal oppression and provided another reason as to why Sparta could ill afford to empty her city of all its Spartiatai hoplites.

Sparta, of course, admitted neither her self-centered view nor her internal problems. She officially blamed the current Feasts of the Carnean Apollo (seemingly a winter Spartan celebration ending as a full moon waned) and the Olympics on her lack of available soldiers. These festivals, however, did not curtail the actions of the allied fleet; on the other hand, it would be quality and not quantity that mattered, and of the bravery of the 300 Spartiatai, the bodyguards of King Leonidas, there was no question.

In Arcadia, the mountainous region of the

inner Peloponnesus, Leonidas mustered a further 2,100 soldiers. Another 400 men joined him from Corinth, 200 from Phleious, and 80 from Mykenai. With 4,000 or so hoplites from the Peloponnesus, Leonidas crossed to mainland Greece, marching past farmhouses, orchards, vineyards, and stone field walls. Seven hundred Thespians, 1,000 Phocians, 400 Thebans, and a small number of Locrians rallied to Leonidas's side. By the time he got to Thermopylae in the summer of 480 BCE, Leonidas commanded about 7,000 troops. There were no Athenians among them. They received a Delphic prophecy of their own, advising them to seek safety "behind the wooden wall," interpreted as the hull of their ships by the Athenian naval proponent, Strategos (General) Themistocles. Themistocles convinced all but a handful of Athenians to concentrate their manpower in their navy.

Thermopylae literally means the "gates of heat," being named after local hot sulfur springs.

Here the coastal road wound along the northern slope of Mount Kallidromo. To the west, the pass led past the famous shrine of the fertility goddess Demeter at the village of Anthela, and beyond that the road crossed the Asopus River. To the east was the Locrian village of Alpenoi.

The western, middle, and eastern parts of the pass were very narrow, a mere 50 feet wide in some parts. In the middle there remained the ruins of a wall, built by the Phocians to keep guard against Thessaly, which Leonidas forthwith repaired. The only way to circumvent the pass was a small, steep trail called the Anopaea, the guarding of which was assumed by the 1,000 Phocians. Because Xerxes was still in Thessaly, Leonidas had time to lead a night raid into the Malian plain to the northwest. Flaming farmsteads lit up the dark. Leonidas's warriors took what food and cattle they needed and destroyed the rest to deny it to the oncoming enemy.

Meanwhile, the Greek navy of 271 triremes and

nine penteconters took position near Artemisium on the northern tip of Euboea Island at the mouth of the Malian Gulf. An additional 53 ships remained near the southern tip of Euboea to prevent the Persians from slipping around and cutting off any chance of retreat for the Greek main fleet.

In mid-August the Persian army arrived in the Malian valley. Out at sea the Persian fleet sailed down Thessaly's rugged coast and destroyed two out of three Greek reconnaissance ships. But soon after, fortune played into the hands of the Greeks. Lack of suitable coastline forced the bulk of the Persian fleet to anchor offshore. The night was calm, but soon after dawn the waters rippled in anticipation of a tempest that thundered down from the east as if driven by the anger of a god. The Persians frantically pulled what ships they could onto the shore, but for many others there was no escape. Frothing waters dashed ships to pieces along the rocky shoreline and dragged crews beneath the waves. For three long days the sea raged while Xerxes' mystic Magians attempted to appease the winds, the sea goddess Thetis, and the sea nymph Nereids with sacrifices. On the fourth day their efforts appeared to lull the storm.

When Euboean scouts reported to their countrymen of the Persian fleet's disaster, the Euboeans hailed the great sea god Poseidon as their savior and poured libations in his honor. The Athenians for their part claimed that Boreas, the God of the North Wind, had come to their aid. The lucky incident somewhat revived the morale of the Greek navy. Faced with the sheer might of the Persian navy and the initial loss of the Greek reconnaissance ships, many Greeks had been ready to withdraw.

Indeed, even with their losses to the storm, the Persians still had many more ships than the Greeks. The Persian fleet probed farther around Euboea's northern tip, deploying at Aphetae on the opposite shore. Two hundred Phoenician ships detached themselves to sail along the open ocean coast of Euboea and round its southern cape to bottle up the Greek fleet in the Malian Gulf.

Urged on by Themistocles, the confederate fleet chanced an engagement with the Persians in the afternoon of August 18. The massive Greek ships initially sank a number of Persian ships, which set forth from their harbors piecemeal. More and more Persian ships threatened to encircle the Greeks who slashed back from a kuklos—a defensive formation of Greek ships facing bow outward, stern inward, like the spokes of a wheel. When darkness fell the Greeks withdrew, having captured 30 ships.

Some days earlier, Leonidas took position at the repaired Phocian wall. Below to the west, on the Malian plain, awaited the Persian multitude. Xerxes knew that despite the pitiful number of



ABOVE: A bronze Corinthian helmet dating from around 480 BCE, the time of the Battle of Thermopylae. BELOW: Bas relief depicting the Persian king Xerxes on his throne at the ruins of his palace in Persepolis. OPPOSITE: The disciplined and heavily armored Spartans on the right defend the pass of Thermopylae against an attack with spears and swords by Xerxes' Immortals.



National Archaeological Museum, Tehran

Greeks, it would not be easy to take the narrow pass. He chose to wait, the mere sight of his mighty host would cause the Greeks to lose heart!

Indeed, fear took hold of many of the Greeks who watched Xerxes' multitude in awe. How could a handful of mere mortals face the fury of such an army? Most of the Peloponnesians called for a retreat back to the isthmus. Such words roused anger in the hearts of the Lorcians and Phocians. They had marshaled every fighting man they could, but without the Peloponnesians they had no chance. Their lands would be forfeited to Xerxes. Struck by the Locrian and Phocians' predicament, Leonidas decided to continue the defense and sent envoys for further help.

Xerxes wished to know what was going on and sent a rider up the pass. When the mounted scout reined in his steed some distance from the Phocian wall, he witnessed a strange sight. The Spartans held vigil in front of the wall and were apparently oblivious to his presence. Some were engrossed in gymnastics while others combed their long, oily hair, hair that was the privilege of veterans.

When the scout reported back to Xerxes, the Great King at first laughed about the antics of the Greeks! He called upon Demaratus, a dethroned Spartan king who had fled to the Persians in the time of Darius. A somber Demaratus enlightened Xerxes: "It is their custom," he said, "when they are about to hazard their lives, to adorn their heads with care. Be assured, however, that if you can subdue the men who are here and the Lacedaemonians, there is no other nation in all the world which will venture to lift a hand in their defense."

Xerxes brooded: How could so few warriors contend the pass? Why were they not fleeing? For four days Xerxes waited, but the stubborn Greeks refused to budge. But how could Xerxes understand the true nature of the Spartans, who were martial anomalies even within the warlike Greek culture?—Spartans, whose struggle began at birth when only the fit were allowed the gift of life, while the weak were exposed in the wilderness or cast down a cliff; Spartans, who were taught by their slave nurses not to fear darkness or solitude. Torn from their mothers at seven or eight years old, they henceforth devoted their whole lives to the state. Although they could marry, they could not farm, nor craft, nor trade, nor own gold or silver. For them there was only constant drill, athletics, and training, and a life devoid of any comforts. Their rations were so meager that they were encouraged to steal. If caught they were beaten, not for stealing but for getting caught! They existed solely for Sparta, to crush her enemies and reduce the conquered to helots.

In light of his army's size and the prior raiding carried out by Leonidas, Xerxes found the store



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of salted meats and grains consumed by his army to be running low. Supply dumps had been set up, but both the army and navy depended heavily on a fleet of supply ships. However, many had succumbed to the storm, while the Greek navy blocked those that remained. Like a plague of locusts, the Persian army needed to move and pillage to survive. On the fifth day, August 18, the day of the naval battle at Aphetæ, Xerxes' patience ran out. He would teach those foolish Spartans a lesson!

For the first assault Xerxes chose his Medes and Kissians from central Persia. Likely Xerxes begrudged the Medes' former lordship over the Persians and thus cared not if they perished. Foolishly, he even ordered them to capture the defenders alive.

Led by Tigranes the Achae-menid, the Medes marched at the front of the column while the Kissians brought up the rear. The pass became ever more narrow. On their left, the banks dropped to the sparkling blue waters of the Malian Gulf, while to their right tall bushes sprawled up the towering slopes of Mount Kallidromo. The going was hard, the parched

ground cracked in the merciless heat of the Greek summer.

Tigranes and his men paused. Ahead a solid wall of bronze, shining fiery red in the sun and bristling with huge spears, blocked the pass. The Spartans wore bell corselets (the *thōrax*) of polished bronze. Bronze greaves protected their shins. Cloaks, dyed red to mask the blood, draped from their shoulders.

Spartan eyes burned with singular determination out of T-shaped helmet slits. The helmet was beaten out of a single sheet of bronze that protected the whole head, including the cheeks, nose, and collarbone. A leather inner lining gave limited protection from concussions. A massive horsehair crest proudly ran along the crown of the helmet, turned transverse for the officers. Named after Corinth, the city of its origin, the "Corinthian" helmet was a masterpiece of metalcraft.

As superb as the hoplite's body armor was, his principal protection was a huge, three- or four-foot-wide round shield. It was so indispensable to the Greek phalanx that its depth was usually referred to by the number of shields, instead of the number of spears or warriors. Made of oak

but covered in bronze, the hoplite shield was held by a handgrip and strapped to the left arm to distribute the weight. Even then, weighing in at 20 pounds, it got so heavy that its upper rim was often rested upon the shoulder. The shield protected the hoplite's left side and the right side of his neighbor. Upon it was emblazoned the Greek letter for L, for Lacedaemon, the mere recognition of which could cause foes to run in fear.

But the Greek "L" did not intimidate the Medes who, like the Persians, were tough, professional soldiers. They would not let Xerxes' personal feelings get in their way or heed his "capture alive" order. Still, Tigranes must have cursed. If only he could outflank the Greeks and with arrows pepper the vulnerable right side of the hoplite phalanx, the side not guarded with shields. But the pass was too narrow; his men would have to fight on the Spartans' terms!

Although Herodotus makes no mention of it, the Medes probably tried to "soften" the Spartan phalanx with missile fire. Typically, eastern archers fired from behind the protection of shields set into the ground. Composite bows twanged and arrows whistled through the air. But precious



ABOVE: The Spartans held the pass of Thermopylae against the massive Persian army of Xerxes for two days, until they were betrayed. A local Malian Greek named Epialtes guided some 20,000 Persians by moonlight along the ridge of Mt. Anopaea behind the cliffs that flanked the pass, allowing them to attack the Spartans from the rear. **OPPOSITE:** In 1832, Italian 19th Century artist Massimo d'Azeglio painted this romanticized depiction of the pass of Thermopylae and the battle between the Spartans and the Persian army.

few bronze arrowheads penetrated flesh as most thudded harmlessly into the great shields or were deflected by nearly invulnerable 1/4-inch-thick bronze breastplates.

The proud Medes gritted their teeth, grasped the shafts of their short spears, and hurled them-

selves at their foes. Greek iron spear points crunched through Medish mail, shattered wicker shields, and shredded through the Medes' charge like sharp rocks tear asunder an angry wave. Although crack Medes and Persian troopers sported bronze or iron dome-shaped helmets and tunics of

bronze "fish scales," their armor was inferior to that of the Greeks. The rank and file had no body armor whatsoever, with naught on their heads but a soft hat or a piece of cloth to shade them from the sun.

More than that, eastern tactics relied on the fluid maneuver of the cavalry, the marksmanship of the archer, and the fighting power of the individual. On the open plain such tactics could pay dividends, but not at Thermopylae, which was tailor-made for hoplite shock tactics.

Unlike the Middle Eastern troops, the Greeks fought as a tight unit. Soldiers served their entire career in platoons of two dozen, known as "sworn bands." Members were not only friends but often lovers as well and to a Greek, nothing seemed nobler than to die for one's lover. The bravest hoplites fought at the front, their comrades forming eight or more ranks behind them. Deep ranks buffered staying power as they prevented those in the combat zone from fleeing. The Spartan poet Tyrtaeus captures the spirit of the Spartan tactics: "Standing foot to foot, shield pressed on shield, crest to crest and helmet to helmet, chest to chest engage your man, grasping your sword hilt or long spear."

In the heat and chaos of combat, the rows and files intermingled. Cohesion was maintained through the melodies of accompanying flutists. The high-pitched tones resounded even within the enclosed Corinthian helmets. Lighter armed helot servants farther to the rear aided their injured masters and dispatched enemy casualties. Wounded hoplites that managed to stagger out of the fray were the lucky ones. Those that went down amid the chaos were doomed. Weighed down by their excessive armor, trampled by friend or foe, blood loss and shock meant death within minutes.

Stabbing with spears, pushing with shields, peripheral vision cut off, and sound muffled by helmets while bearing the burden of 50 to 70 pounds of sun-baked bronze, iron, and wood hopla (combat gear) strained even the Spartans to their limits. Their combat feats are even more astounding considering that based on skeletal evidence, the average hoplite stood 5 feet 6 inches tall and weighed 140 pounds.

Whenever there was a break in the fighting, the Greeks took the opportunity to usher in rested troops and put the weary ones into reserve. In such a way, they fought in detachments drawn up according to their cities, though always under Spartan leadership. The only ones that did not fight during that day and the next were the Phocians who remained guarding the Anopaea trail.

Still, on came the Medes, the living stomping the bodies of the slain till they too joined them in death. Finally, the exhausted survivors limped



Massimo Taparelli D'Azeglio

back down to the plain in defeat. The Kissians had no more luck, if they fought at all, for Herodotus does not mention them in combat.

With the failure of his first assault, Xerxes ordered forth his crack Immortals under their leader Hydarnes. They marched forth in false confidence. The Immortals may have been the best trained and armored of the Persians but they still could not match the hoplites in close combat.

The Immortals presumably drenched the Spartans with sustained volleys of arrows and javelins until suddenly the Greek line cracked. With shouts of panic, the hoplites turned their backs and fled! Letting loose a cry for vengeance, the Immortals bolted after them, but the fleeing Greeks maintained their order. With a change in their flutists' tune the hoplites wheeled about as one, their spears shearing the strung-out Persian pursuers to pieces.

By nightfall, the Greeks watched their enemy depart. Even the Immortals had to admit they had met their match. Here and there a Greek also lay slain. Persian spears had gashed into unprotected throats, thighs, and groins. The casualties were highest among the non-Spartans, many of whom were in leather armor or Persian-style composite

scale mail. But the Greek losses were nothing compared to the crimson-stained heaps of the enemy sprawled across the path. Xerxes thrice "sprang from his throne in agony for his army."

It was time for the Greeks to tend wounds, eat, rest, recuperate their sore muscles, and gain back their spent strength. Although triumphant, not one of them was under the illusion that it was over.

At night the Greek watchmen drew their cloaks about them as the wind picked up and turned into a torrential downpour. Toward the north, thunder and lightning cracked upon the crags of Mount Pelion. Out at sea, the storm whipped the waters into a frenzy. It caught the 200 Phoenician ships just as they skirted the southern tip of Euboea through a perilous coastline known as the Hollows. Only a little farther and they could have reached the safer waters of the Euboean channel. Instead the Phoenician ships were wrecked upon the rocks.

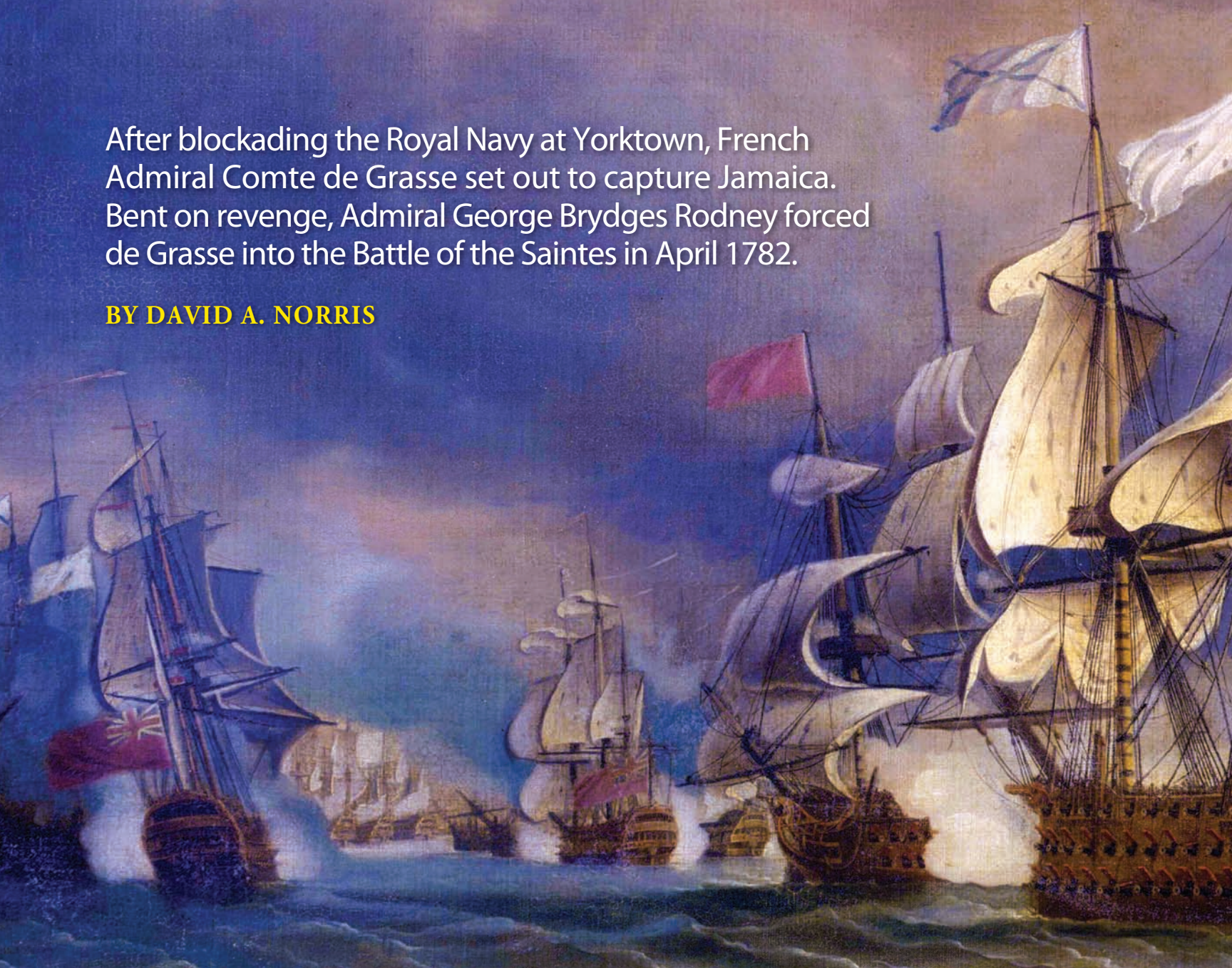
With dawn the sun returned, its rays basking the Persian army as Xerxes drew up fresh contingents of regular Persian troops. He promised them lavish rewards in return for victory and terrible punishments in face of defeat. The Persian trooper stared in dismay upon the indomitable hoplites

and the swaths of mangled Mede, Kissian, and Immortal corpses, the latter's colorful patterned outfits streaked in blood. The Persians had no stomach for a futile fight. Xerxes did not care. The overseers' whips cracked and drove the Persians onto the Greek pikemen and to their deaths.

With the second day no better than the first, Xerxes' ire increasingly turned to desperation. Certainly there were other ways to get over the mountains, but they would take too long. His scouts quite possibly even found the western trailhead of the Anopaea but had no idea where it led. Fortune finally smiled upon Xerxes when a local Malian Greek named Epialtes offered to guide the Persians along the Anopaea to a point behind the defenders of Thermopylae.

The night before the full moon that Sparta linked to its Carnean festival, Epialtes led Hydarnes and his Immortals across the Asopus River gorge and between the two ridges of Mount Kallidromo. Their armor shone softly in the moonlight as the Immortals picked their way around thorny shrubs and through oak woods. Although the climb was tough and steep at first, there was no slack in the Immortals' pace. They

Continued on page 98



After blockading the Royal Navy at Yorktown, French Admiral Comte de Grasse set out to capture Jamaica. Bent on revenge, Admiral George Brydges Rodney forced de Grasse into the Battle of the Saintes in April 1782.

BY DAVID A. NORRIS

CLASH IN THE

Unexpected maneuvers by British Admiral George Brydges Rodney had scrambled the traditional engagement formation of the two fleets. The stately battle line of the French fleet of François-Joseph-Paul, Comte de Grasse, had been broken into pieces. Several ships were isolated, trapped, and outgunned by British vessels. Five ships of the line beset the *Hector*, a single French 74-gun ship. Three pumps, worked furiously by every hand who could be spared from the guns, could not keep ahead of the water pouring

into the *Hector*'s hull. The commander of the *Hector*, Capt. Claude Eugène Chauchouart de la Vicomte, was mortally wounded before he finished instructing his officers to surrender the battered ship. His successor was also wounded, and at last there was only one officer left to strike the colors. The *Hector* would not be the last casualty of Rodney's gamble to "break the line" on April 12, 1782.

Admiral Rodney, who had entered the Royal Navy at the age of 13 in 1732, was now commanding Great Britain's fleet in the Caribbean Sea. Fol-

lowing a long naval career and a time as the governor of Jamaica, he had returned to England. Tremendous gambling losses forced Rodney to flee to Paris in 1774 to avoid debtor's prison, so he missed the opening of the American Revolution. Matters worsened as he went deeper into debt while in Paris, while France and Britain drifted toward open war. A British newspaper claimed that the French were deliberately holding Rodney prisoner, because they feared confronting him at sea. When reports of that claim reached Paris, an elderly



CARIBBEAN

French military hero, Louis Antoine de Gontaut-Biron, duc de Biron, was angered at the newspaper's insult to his nation's integrity that he enabled Rodney to discharge his debts. He returned to active service in 1779, joining a war in which his French benefactor was now his enemy.

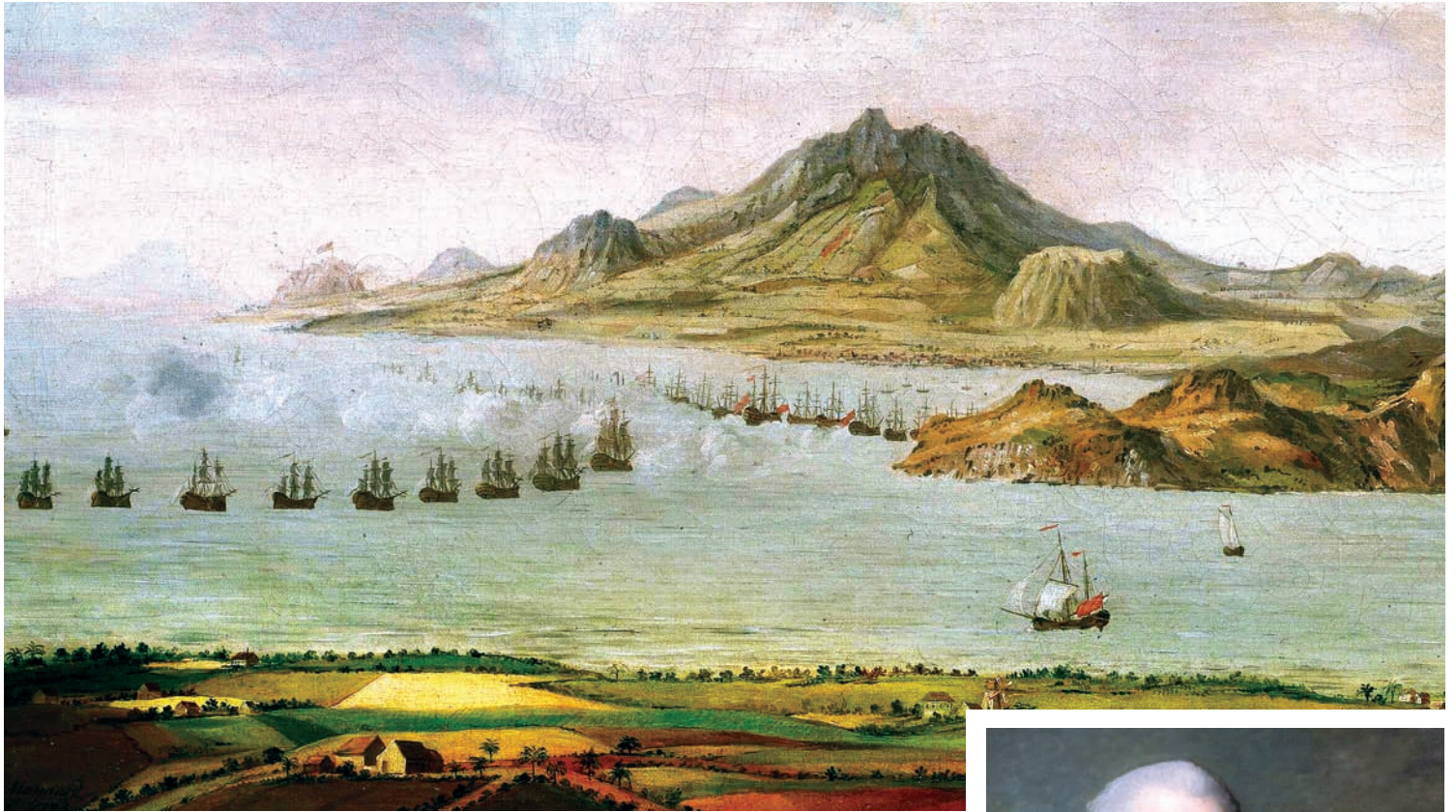
French military aid had enabled Britain's rebellious North American colonies to win independence. A French fleet under de Grasse had fended off reinforcements for the British Army at the Battle of the Virginia Capes on September 5, 1781.

Trapped at Yorktown, Virginia, the Earl of Cornwallis surrendered his forces to Gen. George Washington on October 19, 1781.

After Yorktown, the French commander sailed to the Caribbean hoping to pick off some of George III's Caribbean colonies. At the time, West Indian sugar-producing islands were more profitable than the vast but troublesome North American colonies. Early in 1782, de Grasse captured the British islands of St. Kitts, Nevis, and Montserrat.

Allied with France against Britain, Spain also had

Comte de Grasse's 104-gun French flagship, *Ville de Paris*, is shown at center surrendering to British Admiral Sir George Rodney's 98-gun HMS *Formidable* on the right of this Thomas Mitchell painting, *The Battle of the Saints*, 12 April 1782. In reality, de Grasse surrendered to Admiral Samuel Hood of the HMS *Barfleur*, the bow of which can be seen behind the *Ville de Paris*.



ABOVE: During the French attack on the British islands of St. Kitts and Nevis in January 1782, Admiral Sir Samuel Hood moored his ships in an L-shaped configuration across Frigate Bay with his flagship, *Barfleur*, at the apex. Though Hood's tactic initially repulsed the French attack, the islands would eventually surrender. Thomas Maynard's painting, *Repulse of the French in Frigate Bay, St. Kitts, 26 January 1782*, shows St. Kitts across the Narrows from the northwest heights of Nevis. **RIGHT, TOP:** Admiral Sir George Rodney, commander of the British fleet on the flagship HMS *Formidable*. **RIGHT, BOTTOM:** British Admiral Samuel Hood, commander of the HMS *Barfleur*.

substantial forces in the Caribbean. De Grasse sailed to Fort Royal (now Fort-de-France) in Martinique. He planned to rendezvous with the Spanish at Cap-Français in northern Saint-Domingue (today, the city of Cap-Haïtien in Haiti). A force of 50 French and Spanish ships of the line carrying 20,000 soldiers would fall upon Jamaica, Britain's Caribbean crown jewel. Among the planners of the attack on Jamaica was the Spanish governor of Louisiana, Bernardo de Gálvez.

At Fort Royal, de Grasse assembled 33 ships of the line to guard a convoy of 150 transport vessels. His flagship was the *Ville de Paris*. Rated at 110 guns but carrying up to 120, she was slightly larger than the 100-gun *Victory*, the Royal Navy's largest vessel. His warships were divided into three divisions. One division was de Grasse's own. Admiral Louis-Philippe Rigaud, Marquis de Vaudreuil, the overall second in command, led another division. The third was under the famous officer and explorer of the South Pacific, Louis-Antoine, Comte de Bougainville. Also aboard were as many as 5,500 soldiers. Once away from

the harbor and out to sea, de Grasse would unite with the Spanish for the descent upon Jamaica.

Thirty miles to the south, Rodney's fleet waited at Gros Islet Bay (now Rodney Bay), at the northern end of St. Lucia. Aboard the frigate *Andromache* in command of the fleet's frigate squadron was Capt. George Anson Byron, who would become the uncle of the famed poet George Gordon, Lord Byron. Observers on Signal Peak, the highest point on Pigeon Island, watched for signals from the frigates. Rodney himself climbed to the top of the peak with his telescope. Seated in an armchair and shaded under a tent made of a canvas sail, the admiral scanned the seas and waited for de Grasse to sail.

On April 5, Byron signaled that soldiers were boarding the vessels at Fort Royal. Three days later, the French fleet left the harbor and Rodney followed with his 36 ships of the line. His flagship was the 98-gun *Formidable*. With him were Adm. Samuel Hood, aboard the 98-gun *Barfleur*, and Vice-Adm. Francis Samuel Drake, a descendant of the legendary Elizabethan mariner Sir Francis





Royal Museums Greenwich/public domain

ABOVE: *The Battle of Frigate Bay, 26 January 1782* by Nicholas Pocock depicts the British fleet under Admiral Sir Samuel Hood trying to defend the British islands of St. Kitts and Nevis against a larger and more superior French fleet under the Comte de Grasse. At left, the HMS *Alfred* fires a broadside into a French ship, but Hood's fleet was unable to stop the surrender of the islands. RIGHT: Commander of the French fleet, Lieutenant-General of the Navy François Joseph Paul, Comte de Grasse. De Comte would surrender his 104-gun flagship, *Ville de Paris*, to Admiral Rodney late in the Battle of the Saintes with 400 of his crew killed.

Drake, on the 70-gun *Princessa*.

De Grasse sailed northward from Martinique. Making good time, Rodney sailed past Martinique to catch de Grasse between Dominica (a British possession seized by the French the previous year) and the French colony of Guadeloupe on April 9. Most of de Grasse's fleet was becalmed in the lee of Dominica's rugged 4,000-foot volcanic peaks. About 15 of the French ships of the line, though, were far enough beyond the high mountains ashore to catch fresh winds that pushed them near a collection of little islands called the Iles de Saintes, between Dominica and Guadeloupe.

For several hours, the still air stalled the rest of the French fleet and nearly immobilized their pursuers. When a fresh breeze reached the French, de Grasse signaled the convoy vessels to run to Guadeloupe under the guard of two 50-gun ships, then ordered his leading vessels to confront Rodney.

The fleets maneuvered slowly as the feeble winds remained fickle, damaging each other from long range. Among Rodney's ships the *Royal Oak* lost her main topmast and the *Warrior's* was so damaged that it toppled two days later. Capt.

William Baines of the *Alfred* had his leg taken off by a cannonball and died before a tourniquet could be applied.

Lieutenant Karl Gustav Tornquist, one of several Swedish officers serving with de Grasse, wrote that a gun exploded aboard his 74-gun *Northumberland*, killing 11 and wounding 25 men. Another cannon burst aboard the French 64-gun *Caton*, reportedly putting 80 men out of action. The *Caton* slipped away to Guadeloupe the next day for repairs.

After the opening clash, the convoy departed for Cap-Français. Outnumbered, the French commander wanted to avoid battle and protect the transports. Once united with the Spanish, de Grasse would have enough ships and guns to fall upon Jamaica, and deal with the Royal Navy as well.

De Grasse stayed to the windward of the British and hovered near the Iles de Saintes. Little happened for two days, except that the French 74-gun *Zélé* collided with the 64-gun *Jason*. The *Zélé* lost her main topmast, and the *Jason* was so damaged that she dropped out of the fleet and followed the *Caton* to Guadeloupe.





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ABOVE: Admiral Rodney's flagship H.M.S. *Formidable*, 98-guns, breaking the line, at the beginning of the Battle of the Saintes, 12th April 1782, by Nicholas Pocock, portrays the first recorded use of the new naval tactic during the Battle of the Saintes in 1782. Whether Rodney's disruption of the traditional naval engagement formation—by "crossing the T" through the opposing line of ships to fire across the enemy's bow—was due to circumstances of the wind, or an intentional strategy, remains a matter of debate. **OPPOSITE:** This painting by Nicholas Pocock, *Battle of the Saintes, April 1782*, shows British ships following Admiral Rodney's example in breaking the French line. The HMS *Duke*, center, moves to engage two French ships. At the left, the HMS *Agamemnon* fires a starboard broadside at two more vessels from the French fleet.

De Grasse could have gotten past the British and followed the convoy, but had to moderate his speed for the crippled *Zélé*. On the night of April 11-12, the troublesome vessel lost her bowsprit and mainmast in a collision with the *Ville de Paris* that also damaged the masts and rigging of the flagship. John Paul Jones, who later served as a volunteer with Admiral Vaudreuil, heard much about the battle. Jones said "this accident was due to the deficiency of watch-officers in the French Navy; the deck of the *Zélé* being in charge of a young ensign, instead of an experienced lieutenant." The collision with the *Ville de Paris* was the fourteenth accident involving the *Zélé* in 13 months.

The *Zélé* was towed to Guadeloupe by the frigate *Astrée*, dropping de Grasse was down to 30 ships of the line to face 36 of Rodney's.

At daybreak on April 12, the French were between Dominica and the Saintes. Although the British had closed much of the distance between the fleets, de Grasse still had a good chance of

eluding pursuit. But, far from their comrades and much closer to the British were two isolated French ships—the *Astrée* towing the *Zélé*.

Rodney dispatched four ships after the *Zélé*. Rather than lose a 74-gun vessel, de Grasse ordered his captains to form a line of battle. By 7 a.m., Rodney recalled his four ships and formed his own line, approaching the enemy on a northerly course.

De Grasse sailed roughly south at an angle that would have intersected with the British. When the wind shifted, Rodney's ships steered east north-east, and the French turned south south-east. In this new alignment, the first several French ships passed out of range before they were able to fire a shot. At 8 a.m., the French *Brave* (ninth in line) fired on the lead English ship, the *Marlborough*. Again, the British altered course, sailing north north-west to parallel the enemy line. Both lines pressed ahead, firing broadsides as enemy vessels took their turns slowly coming

within range under the light breeze. So slow was the wind that it was almost 9:30 when the last British ship in line, the *Barfleur*, opened fire.

De Grasse signaled the ships of his van to turn south southwest, which would bring them back parallel with the advancing British. But, trouble still loomed ahead for the French admiral. His course, if held, would soon have the fleet becalmed in the lee of Dominica's heights.

Only a few dozen yards apart, floating slowly in the feeble breezes, each pair of ships had time to pound each other at short range. Sails were punctured and slashed by shot until severed masts and spars crashed onto the decks, or plunged into the sea. When the fitful breezes ceased, a thick fog of gunpowder smoke made it difficult to identify or signal vessels, or sometimes even to see them.

By 9:15, the French *Glorieux* had lost her main and mizzen masts. As the wind shifted to blow from the southeast, the French turned their bows *en echelon* toward the British to keep their sails



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filled with the wind. Amid the changes in course and the winds, the *Glorieux* ground nearly to a halt. To avoid collision, two French ships behind the *Glorieux* bore up, opening a gap in the line of battle.

Normally in a fleet action, ships fought single file in two parallel lines. This way, each ship presented the maximum number of guns while covering the vulnerable bow or stern of her neighbors. Already within pistol shot of the *Glorieux*, Rodney ordered the *Formidable* to starboard, to cut through the gap in the enemy line.

How innovative was Rodney's decision to break the line of battle? Admirals had occasionally done so in previous wars. Rodney may have seen preliminary writings on the topic by naval tactician John Clerk of Eldin, who later promoted "cutting the line" in his 1790 *Essay on Naval Tactics*. In 1829 General Sir Howard Douglas, son of Rodney's flag captain Sir Charles Douglas, published testimonials that credited Captain Douglas for insisting that the reluctant admiral break the line.

Whether Rodney's inspiration was a long-standing idea or the spontaneous grasping of opportunity, he cut the line just astern of the *Glorieux*. No previous signals had alerted any of his captains to this move, but now, five more British

vessels followed the flagship.

The ship ahead of the *Formidable*, the *Duke*, also turned to cut the enemy line. Two ships, the *Destin* and the *Magnanime*, confronted the *Duke*. The *Destin* "poured in a broadside, not three bullets of which fell into the water..." said a French witness, "then, keeping the wind, cannonaded her on one side, while the *Magnanime* did as much, till bearing down in her turn, she swept the *Duke* from the stern, carrying her two galleries overboard." Heavy fire shot brought down the *Duke*'s main topmast. A French witness stated that "this vessel was kept engaged by the *Reflechy*, and *Diadème*, and struck to the *Triumphant*; but M. de Vaudreuil could not man her, having no boats nor time." British sources omit mention of the *Duke* striking her colors and escaping, but the ship's "butcher's bill" of 17 sailors dead, and three officers and 57 men wounded, was among the highest toll aboard Rodney's vessels. Horatio Nelson, then a captain and not with Rodney's fleet, later mentioned a rumor that the *Duke* had blown up during the battle.

Astern of Rodney's flagship, the *Bedford* steered to break another gap in the enemy line, between the French 74s *César* and *Hector*. The *Bedford* was part of the rear division, under Rear Admiral Samuel Hood. Through the smoke, Hood saw

that "the signal for the line was hauled down" by Rodney. Becalmed for the moment, he ordered his boats out to tow his flagship *Barfleur* toward the enemy. Rewarded with a bit of a breeze, Hood ordered all of his division toward the French. They followed the *Bedford*, pouring their fire into the *Hector* and the *Cesar*.

Rodney and Hood scrambled the expected battle plan, breaking the French formation into pieces. In effect, the British had three small lines of battle, with those led by Rodney and Hood cutting through the enemy fleet.

British gunners enjoyed another deadly advantage: the newly developed heavy, wide-bore guns called carronades. Throwing much heavier shot than traditional long guns, carronades paid for their smashing power with a limited range. On April 9, de Grasse's ships kept their distance, making carronades useless and limiting the battle to the long guns. But, on April 12, the ships closed to within pistol shot. At that short range, the carronades hurled devastating heavy cannonballs and loads of grapeshot. Rodney stated that the *Formidable* alone fired eighty broadsides on April 12, throwing 35 tons of iron at the enemy. One French officer estimated that counting swivel guns, over 100,000 shots were fired by the cannon of the opposing fleets.

A shot from the *Ville de Paris* smashed into a chicken coop on the deck of the *Formidable*. Squawking chickens scampered away from the shattered remains of the coop. A cockerel fluttered his way up to roost on a spar over the quarterdeck. Perched on the yardarm, the rooster crowed and flapped his wings at every broadside. Admiral Rodney pointed to the rooster and told his surgeon Gilbert Blane, "Look at that fellow. Look at him; I declare he is a credit to his country". After the battle, remembered one of the admiral's friends, Rodney ordered the rooster to be "pampered and protected for life."

A British gunner, whose wife was secretly aboard one of Rodney's ships, was wounded and taken to the surgeon. His wife insisted that she had the right to take over his place, and helped fire back at the enemy. Rodney later reprimanded the gunner's wife for breaking regulations, but he privately complimented her with a gift of ten gold guineas.

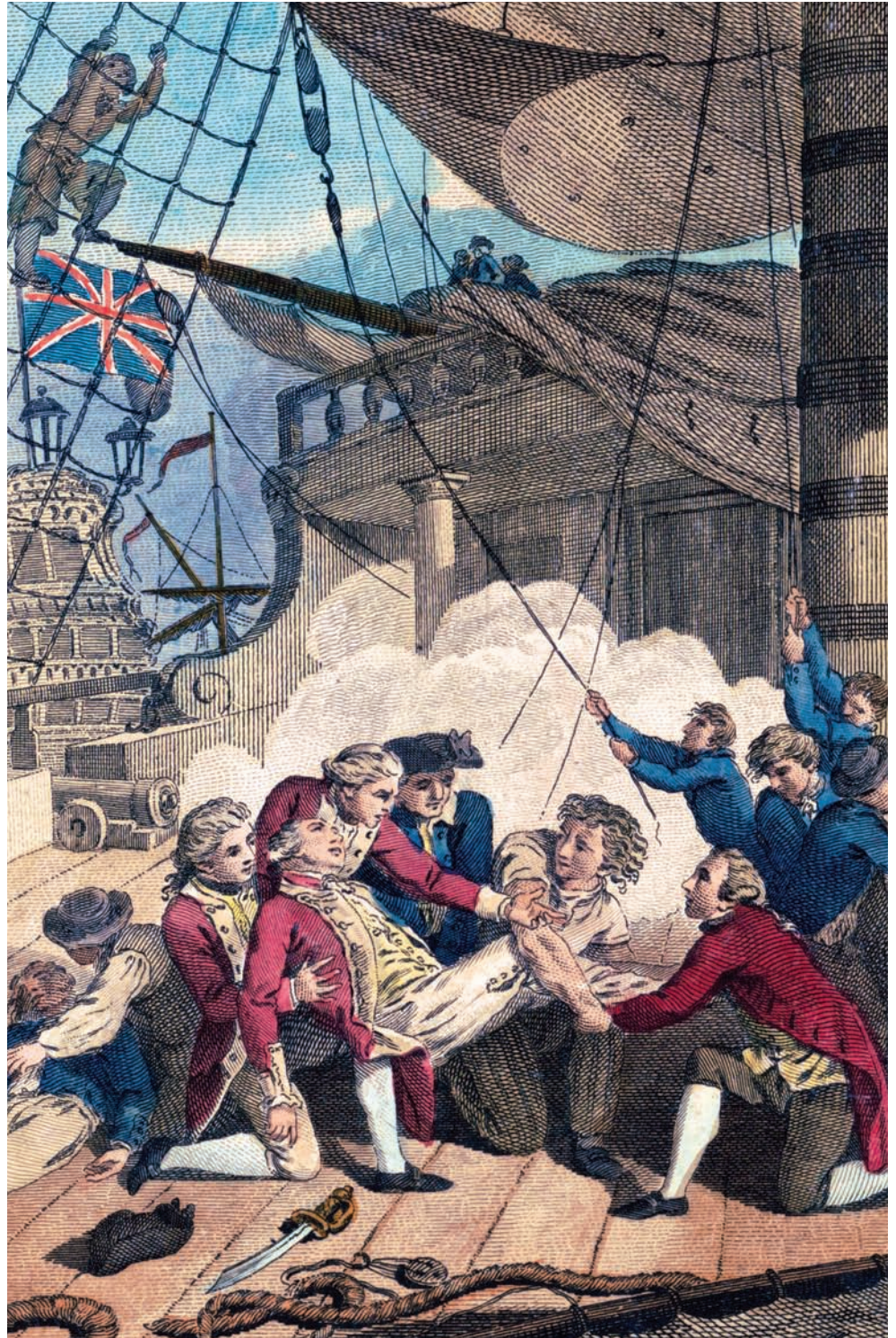
First the *Formidable*, then the *Namur*, hammered the already damaged *Glorieux*. Next followed the *Canada*, a 74 commanded by Capt. William Cornwallis, brother of the unfortunate Lord Cornwallis who surrendered Britain's North American army at Yorktown the year before.

Cornwallis' guns brought down the foremast and bowsprit of the *Glorieux*. The *Glorieux*'s captain, the Vicomte d'Escars (a great-grandson of England's exiled James II, he was a notably bitter enemy of the British), was killed early in the action. Surviving gunners kept to their stations, while taking broadsides on each side of their ship. With the remnant of the broken stump of the mainmast as a staff, the flag of France still flew.

From the frigate *Richemont*, Midshipman Denis Decrès took a boat to bring a tow line to the *Glorieux*. Cannon shot splashed into the water around the boat, but Decrès delivered the tow line. The *Richemont* got under way, but the frigate struggled to drag the larger ship, with its hull filling with water. Lt. Jean-Honoré de Trogoff de Kerlessy had taken command of the *Glorieux* after d'Escars fell. Seeing that his ship could not be pulled fast enough to escape, the new commander did not want to sacrifice a frigate as well. The *Glorieux* hailed the frigate, urging the crew to drop the tow line and save themselves. When the *Richemont*'s captain refused to give up, Trogoff de Kerlessy ordered his crew to cut the towing cable.

At last, the shattered *Glorieux* ceased fire and surrendered to the *Royal Oak*. The British officers who took possession of the ship "were shown the stains of blood on the gunnel" where d'Escars's "body was thrown overboard."

De Grasse signaled for his ships to reassemble, but the captains were unable to rebuild their line. His van was two miles away to windward from de Grasse, and the remainder of the fleet was



ABOVE: Captain, Lord Robert Manners, commander of the HMS *Resolution*, was severely wounded during the Battle of the Saintes, as depicted in this engraving for George Frederick Raymond's 1790 *A New, Universal, and Impartial History of England*. Manners' legs were shattered by a cannonball and his right arm was broken by a large splinter. He initially survived his wounds after his left leg was amputated above the knee, but died of tetanus 11 days later and was buried at sea on the voyage back to England. **OPPOSITE:** The French ship *César* was dismantled and captured by the HMS *Centaur* at the Battle of the Saintes on April 12, 1782. A British prize crew of 58 men and a lieutenant were put aboard the *César* and its crew were locked below decks. That evening, as illustrated in *The end of the César*, by François Aimé Louis Dumoulin, prisoners trying to break into the officers' liquor cabinet started a fire that spread to the ship's magazine. Some 400 French and 50 British sailors were killed in the blast.



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about four miles to leeward. Rodney and Hood closed in on the enemy vessels left behind when the battle line was broken. With de Grasse's line in disarray, the ships closest to the British were far away from help, and in danger of being trapped and outgunned like the *Glorieux*.

British prisoners were pressed into manning the pumps aboard the battered French ships. Seaman John Dowling was a captive aboard the 74-gun *Bourgogne*. Dowling later reported 160 of the crew were killed or wounded. The captain, according to the prisoner, wanted to strike but his officers persuaded him to fight on. When the firing ended, the *Bourgogne* was down to just three rounds of cannon shot.

The memoirs of Lord Admiral James Saumarez, who commanded the 74-gun *Russell* during the battle, noted that "the captain of the maintop . . . having received a shot that carried off one of his arms, instead of requesting the assistance of his companions to take him below, insisted that they should continue at their stations, and let himself down by one of the backstays. After suffering amputation, he persisted in going again on deck, where he remained encour-

aging the men until the action terminated."

From the ships of both fleets, dead sailors and severed limbs were heaved overboard all day. Each splash spread more blood in the water. Lured by the slaughter, a multitude of hungry sharks swarmed among the embattled ships, waiting for more bodies to feed upon.

Aboard the French 74-gun *César*, Capt. Bernard de Marigny lost his leg to a cannonball. Taken below, de Marigny turned over command to his lieutenant. Dismasted and nearly out of ammunition, the *César* struck to the *Centaure*.

The *Hector*, according to one of de Grasse's officers, "sustained the most stubborn and terrible action possible. She looked like a blazing furnace vomiting forth fire and iron. After losing her captain, M. de la Vicomte, with six feet of water in her hold and incapable of further resistance, she struck."

The *Ardent*, one of Bougainville's squadron, had been in the van but turned back to assist the ships trapped by Rodney. Beset by the *Belliqueux* and the *Prince William*, pounded the *Ardent* into striking. Some British prisoners on board, taken from a merchant vessel captured some time ago, hauled up their red ensign to signal the ship's surrender.

The taking of the *Ardent* was especially sweet to the British. Originally part of the Royal Navy, she had been captured by the French Navy in 1779.

None of de Grasse's ships could cut through the British vessels surrounding the *Ville de Paris*. Her rudder and spars were shot away. De Grasse was one of only three officers who were still on their feet. Casualties reached 400 dead and 600 wounded. On the gun decks, the candles had burned out in the battle lanterns, and all the cartridges had been fired away. Exhausted gunners fought, with the powder monkeys scooping out the last crumbs of powder from nearly empty barrels for new cartridges. One of the flagship's guns exploded, killing sixteen sailors.

Admiral Hood in the *Barfleur* believed he saw the *Ville de Paris* nearing him, and he "concluded that de Grasse had a mind to be my prisoner, as an old acquaintance." Hood held his fire until he ordered a continuous roll of broadsides at point-blank range. Ten minutes later, as the sun was lowering in the sky, de Grasse surrendered his ship to Hood. Now in command, Vaudreuil led the escape of most of the French fleet.

Volunteer aide Capt. Lord James Cranstoun



Royal Museums Greenwich/public domain

boarded the *Ville de Paris* to take possession of the ship, and to receive de Grasse's sword. Cranstoun ascended up the side and set foot on the captured vessel. He beheld an "altogether terrible" panorama of destruction. "Between the foremast and mainmast at every step", he later told a fellow officer, "he was over his buckles in blood, the carnage having been prodigious..."

The Royal Navy's gunners, as they were trained, concentrated their fire into the hulls of enemy vessels. French gunners tended to shred enemy masts and yards, in hopes of trapping and capturing enemy ships with less-damaged hulls. During this battle all three of the trucks (round wooden pieces that tipped the tops of each mast) of Admiral Drake's flagship, the 70-gun *Princessa*, were shot away. Yet, the *Princessa* had only three sailors killed and 22 officers and sailors wounded.

When Cranstoun stepped below decks of the *Ville de Paris*, he had a horrifying look at the results of the British strategy of firing into the hulls. On the lower decks, the horror of spilled blood was even more intense than up top. The British shot that plunged through the sides and slaughtered so

many of the crew and the military passengers also tore through the cattle and sheep penned on board as food for the soldiers. Trapped in the deadly fire, the animals "suffered not less from the crew and the troops from the effects of the cannon", and the blood of the mangled animals was mingled with that of the human casualties.

At the battle's end, many masts and spars in the British fleet were missing or cracked, but Rodney did not lose a single ship. His losses were 243 dead and 816 wounded. French casualties were apparently not available to British chroniclers, but estimates ran as high as 5500 or more dead. De Grasse's fleet lost six post captains dead. Rodney lost one captain killed on April 9, while in the larger battle of April 12, he had one captain killed and one mortally wounded.

The mortally wounded commander was Capt. Robert Manners of the *Resolution*. Manners even made light of his condition in a letter, writing after the battle, "I am as well as a man can be with one leg cut off, one wounded, and the right arm broken. The doctor, who is sitting by me at present, says there are every hopes of recovery." Man-

ners soon developed tetanus, and died 11 days after he was wounded.

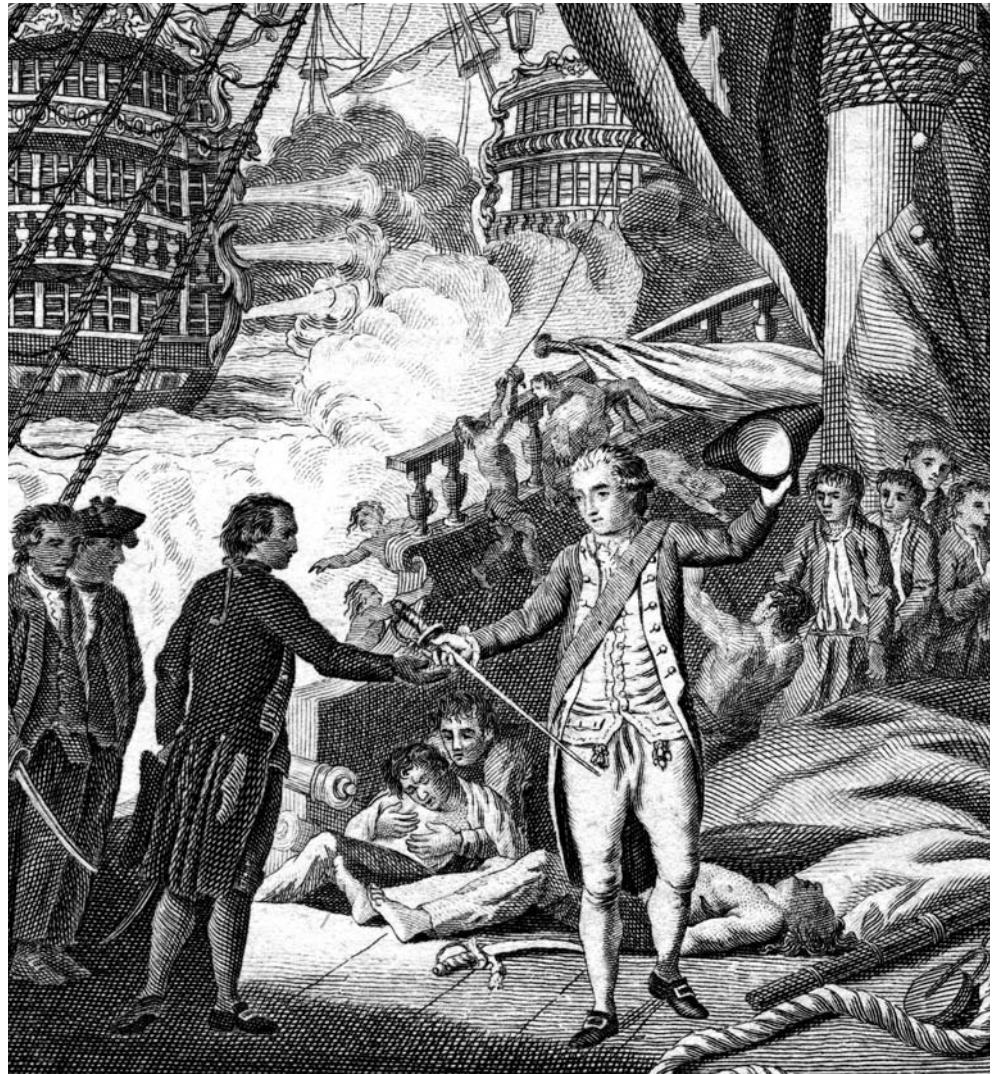
Altogether, five French ships were captured: the *Ville de Paris*, *Hector*, *Ardent*, *Glorieux*, and *César*. A lieutenant with a 50-man prize crew from the *Centaur* took possession of the *César*. A short time after the prize crew took charge, either one of the captors or one of the captured prowled below deck with a lantern in search of liquor. The candle ignited a cask of the French Caribbean rum known as ratafia, and the flaming alcohol fueled an uncontrollable blaze.

French sources state that Captain de Marigny was still alive, but he could not rise from his bed. Several sailors burst into his cabin and warned him that his ship was doomed. They offered to carry him to safety, but he turned the men away. "All the better!" he said. "At least the English will not have her. Close the door, my friends, and save yourselves."

The British prize crew and some of de Marigny's men fought a losing battle against the flames that relentlessly consumed the ship. There was no escape from the advancing flames. During



BELOW: French Admiral Comte de Grasse surrenders to British Admiral Samuel Hood aboard the HMS *Barfleur* after the Battle of the Saintes. In this period engraving. The '62' de Grasse was often depicted as much larger in period British cartoons. **LEFT:** *The Battle of the Saints, 12 April 1782, end of the action*, by Thomas Whitcombe, captures the moment when de Grasse's 104-gun flagship, *Ville de Paris*, surrendered at sunset. In the right foreground, Admiral Rodney's 98-gun flagship, the HMS *Formidable*, fires its starboard guns at the sterns of two retreating French ships. To the left of Rodney's ship, a French vessel appears to be sinking as it strikes its colors.



Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection

the battle, the boats of the *César* had been smashed by flying shot. Anyone who jumped overboard to escape the fire fell victim to the horde of sharks circling the stricken vessel.

Under the night sky, the glow of the burning ship was visible to men on the decks of the retreating French fleet. They saw a final flare as the magazine exploded, and then the glow faded from sight. Rodney's boats finally made their way through the sharks to the spot where the *César* went down. They picked up only a handful of French survivors. Not one of the prize crew was saved.

A French witness wrote that earlier, the 74-gun *Palmier* had struck her flag as well, but none of Rodney's officers were able to row over and take possession. Then, the crew saw that the *César* was afire, but they mistook the burning ship for one of Rodney's. An officer on the *Palmier* asked Captain Martelly-Chautard for permission to save the ship. The captain, "charmed with the proposal ... told him that he had only to act as he pleased, and the officer saved the vessel." The *Palmier* slipped away into the night "without noise or show of light," and even-

tually joined the remaining ships of the fleet.

In common with the *César*, three other prizes taken at the Battle of the Saintes ever made it to Great Britain. The *Hector* under its new British crew was damaged in a battle with two French frigates, leaving her in poor shape when she was pummeled in the great hurricane of September 1782. Although she survived the storm, the *Hector* sank on October 4. The same September hurricane also sank the *Glorieux* and the *Ville de Paris* with all hands, save one crewman of the latter ship. Later known as "Wilson of the *Ville de Paris*," he clung to a piece of wreckage until a Danish merchant ship rescued him.

With Vaudreuil in command, the other

French ships fled toward the horizon. Justin Girod-Chantrons, a French naturalist aboard one of the ships that escaped, wrote, "after the fight our sails and rigging were in rags; we had not a single sheet to the foremast. We had over eighty balls in the hull, eight under the water line, and a hundred men killed or wounded of our crew of five hundred."

Rodney, weighing the battered condition of his force and the need to protect the remaining British colonies in the Antilles, let them go. Besides the five ships of the line taken, the British for a time believed an erroneous report that another was sunk. Adding to the heavy cost to the


Continued on page 96



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Normandy was the chessboard over which General Eisenhower and Field Marshal Rommel would move hundreds of thousands of pawns with nothing less than the ultimate victory or defeat of Europe at stake. | **BY FLINT WHITLOCK**

Ike vs. the Desert Fox at NORMANDY

One of the supreme ironies of World War II was that the outcome of the Allied invasion of France, and ultimately the fate of the European Theater, would be decided by two men—one a highly decorated veteran, the other untested in combat—and it would be the latter that eventually triumphed.

German Field Marshal Erwin Johannes Eugen Rommel faced U.S. General Dwight David Eisenhower across the English Channel in 1944 as distant adversaries, each trying to out-guess the other, each attempting to anticipate and counter the other's moves.

The two men had much in common. They were born a year apart to lower middle-class parents, had decided at an early age to pursue military careers, and had earned the respect of their peers and superiors for being level-headed and driven in the pursuit of excellence. They were both moral, highly principled soldiers.

There was also a significant difference. Rommel had had considerable combat experience in two world wars, had distinguished himself under fire, had numerous scars from wounds received, and had earned his country's highest military decorations—all things Eisenhower lacked. Eisenhower's claim to fame was as a dutiful staff and training officer.

Dwight David Eisenhower was born to hard-working parents David and Ida Eisenhower on October 14, 1890, in Denison, Tex. His family had established itself in Abilene, Kansas, in the 1800s, where David had owned a general store before it

failed due to an unscrupulous business partner. The family moved to Texas in search of work, then came back to Abilene in 1891 where David found a job as a mechanic at a creamery.

Dwight and his five brothers were raised by their authoritarian father and caring mother to be honest, religious, obedient, self-reliant, responsible, and competitive. "Little Ike" (as he was known to differentiate himself from older brother Edgar, or "Big Ike") was a good athlete and an average student, except for spelling and math, in which he excelled. But it was military history that really intrigued him, and in 1911 he earned an appointment to West Point. His big, infectious grin, athletic talents, and ability to shrug off the physical and mental rigors of West Point helped him make friends easily.

He graduated in 1915 with 164 others, 59 of whom would reach the rank of brigadier general or above. It is said that his class was "the class the stars fell on," for among the graduates that year were many whom World War II would make famous, such as Omar Bradley, James Van Fleet, Charles Ryder, and Joseph McNarney. In 1915, he was made supply officer of the 57th Infantry Regiment at Fort Sam Houston, near San Antonio, Tex. Here he met Mamie Doud, a young lady from Denver, whom he married on July 1, 1916.

In 1917, after the United States entered the Great War, Lieutenant Eisenhower was promoted to captain. Hoping to be assigned to a unit going overseas, Ike was instead assigned to train officer candidates. In February 1918, Eisenhower received orders to report to a tank unit at Camp Meade, Md., where he

LEFT: General Dwight D. Eisenhower poses in his eponymous "Eisenhower jacket" or "Ike jacket," in 1943. The "Wool Field Jacket, M-1944," as it was officially known, debuted in the European Theater of Operations in November 1944 and was issued to U.S. troops until 1956. FAR LEFT: Field Marshal Erwin Rommel remains a controversial figure known both as a shrewd, chivalrous, military commander and as Nazi with a potential role in Germany's atrocities of war.



ABOVE: When Adolf Hitler, right, came to power and began rebuilding the German military, Rommel became a supporter. The Field Marshal would tell Hitler the war was unwinnable in June and July of 1944, then he forced to commit suicide in October for his complicity in a plot to assassinate the Führer. **LEFT:** Lieutenant Erwin Rommel on the Italian Front in 1917 during the Great War. **FAR LEFT:** General Dwight D. Eisenhower as a cadet at West Point in 1911.

quickly saw the potential of armor. Although the tank battalion went “over there,” Ike stayed “here,” in command of Camp Colt, on the Gettysburg battlefield. In October 1918, he was promoted to the temporary grade of lieutenant colonel, but his pride in receiving the promotion was tempered by the disappointment of the war ending without his having taken part in it.

By 1920, the American Army had shrunk from a wartime high of over 2.7 million officers and enlisted men to only 130,000 active-duty soldiers. The interwar period saw Ike revert to major and remain in that rank for 16 years. He watched his brothers succeed in their civilian professions and thought seriously about quitting the military, but a sense of duty compelled him to stay in.

Over a two-decade span, he attended numerous service schools and was posted to various locales—Panama, Washington, D.C., Paris, and Manila. From 1922 until 1942, Ike learned his craft at the side of a succession of forceful, charismatic officers who would become legendary: Generals Fox Conner, John J. Pershing, Douglas MacArthur, and George C. Marshall. He learned much from each and they, in turn, saw his sterling qualities. By the time World War II broke out, he was an amalgam of all their virtues and was considered by MacArthur and Marshall as “the best officer in the Army.”

In December 1939, Ike returned stateside after four years at MacArthur’s headquarters in Manila and became a battalion executive officer in the 15th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Infantry Division,

at Fort Lewis, Wash. In March 1941, he was promoted to full colonel. Three months later, he became chief of staff for the Third Army, where he received a hands-on education in large-scale operations during the huge Louisiana maneuvers in the autumn of 1941. War was on the horizon and it was clear the United States was woefully unprepared.

Erwin Rommel was 13 months younger than Eisenhower, having been born on November 15, 1891, in the Swabian town of Heidenheim, north of Ulm. While Ike’s military career, until the start of World War II, could best be described as “plodding,” Rommel’s was brilliant. Overcoming the stigma of being born to a humble school teacher rather than a career officer of the aristocratic Prussian junker class, he quickly impressed his superiors in the Württemberg 124th Infantry Regiment, in which he enlisted in 1910 as an officer-cadet. He then attended the Kriegsschule in Danzig and received his commission in 1912.

Second Lieutenant Rommel was a hard taskmaster, but never ordered a subordinate to do anything he was not willing to do himself. Like Eisenhower, he had high personal standards and showed little tolerance for those under him who failed to demonstrate the same type of commitment. Upon the outbreak of World War I, his commitment was put to the test.

On August 25, 1914, while leading a patrol near Longwy during Germany’s advance to the Marne, Rommel launched an audacious assault. In this, his first combat experience, he demon-

strated the type of decisive, quick-thinking leadership that would mark his career. Wounded in September, he returned to his unit in January and led his platoon in another heroic action that earned him the Iron Cross, First Class.

He was promoted to first lieutenant, was wounded again, and then transferred in April 1915 to the *Württembergische Gebirgs-Bataillon* (Württemberg Mountain Battalion), part of the newly created elite *Alpenkorps* (Mountain Corps). With this unit he would see action in the Vosges Mountains of Alsace-Lorraine, as well as in Romania and Italy. Leading two companies in a ruthless battle against a much larger Italian force at Caporetto, Rommel and his men overcame the enemy, then climbed the key high ground, Monte Matajur, to take its defenders prisoner. Rommel’s actions, which led to the rout of the Italians at Caporetto (and 250,000 prisoners subsequently taken), won him the *Pour le Mérite* (Blue Max) and a promotion to captain and sealed his reputation as a fearless warrior and tactician. Not wishing this valuable resource to become a combat casualty, the Reichswehr then transferred Rommel to a staff job.

After the war ended in 1918, Rommel was one of only 4,000 officers allowed by the Treaty of Versailles to be retained on active duty. As in the American Army, promotions in the German Army during the interwar years were slow; Rommel spent eight years as a company commander in the 13th Infantry Regiment at Stuttgart. But his uncompromising standards and unyielding

devotion to duty impressed his superiors, who marked him as someone worthy of higher rank and command.

In 1929, Rommel began a four-year tour as an instructor at the Infantry School in Dresden, and a book he wrote based on his combat experiences—*Infantry Attacks*—went on to sell an astonishing 400,000 copies.

Once Adolf Hitler became German chancellor in 1933 and began beefing up the military, promotions came rapidly. Elevated to major that year, Rommel became a battalion commander within a Gebirgs regiment. He was promoted two years later to lieutenant colonel, and became an instructor at the War College in Potsdam. In 1937, he received the rank of full colonel and was made the director of the War College at Wiener Neustadt.

From time to time, Rommel was detailed to head Hitler's personal bodyguard, the Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler, where he became a devotee of the German dictator because of Hitler's boldness in rebuilding the German military machine in spite of international prohibitions. In turn, Rommel became one of Hitler's favorite generals, partly because he was not one of the Prussian aristocrats around whom the former corporal felt uncomfortable.

Rommel was promoted to major general in late August 1939 and transferred to Hitler's headquarters; war with Poland followed a week later. To reward his loyalty, Hitler gave Rommel, a great advocate of mobile warfare, his choice of combat commands; Rommel chose the 7th Panzer Division.

The 7th Panzer suited him perfectly, and he whipped the unit into fighting shape in a matter of three months. On May 10, 1940, Rommel led his men (the so-called "Ghost Division," for its seeming ability to materialize out of thin air where least expected) as part of the spearhead of the invasion of France. The daring, hard-driving Rommel was dubbed the "Knight of the Apocalypse," for he was usually with his advance elements as they crashed through enemy defenses.

In less than 10 days, 7th Panzer had advanced all the way to Cambrai and helped drive a wedge between the French and the British Expeditionary Force, thus forcing the British to head for Dunkirk—and evacuation. With the British hors de combat, Rommel turned his division westward and rushed toward Cherbourg, traveling more than 200 miles in two days; the city surrendered to him on June 19; France capitulated on the 22nd.

During the six-week campaign, Rommel's division captured nearly 100,000 prisoners and his fame grew to almost mythic proportions. Some regarded him as a throwback to the days of chivalry; he fought honorably and always treated

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ABOVE: Air Force Colonel Elliot Roosevelt, son of President Franklin Roosevelt, left, studies aerial photographs of the battlefield in North Africa with General Eisenhower. **TOP:** It was in North Africa that Field Marshal Rommel, standing on top of an Italian tank in 1942, earned the respect of his enemies for his prowess as a battlefield commander and his nickname, "Desert Fox," though he would ultimately be defeated by the Allies.

his captives decently. In January 1941, he was promoted to lieutenant general.

Described as being without fear, Rommel possessed an uncanny ability to inspire his troops to strike boldly even when the odds were against them. When Germany's ally Italy got itself hopelessly bogged down in Africa, Hitler came to the rescue with a unique, two-division group of desert warriors named the Afrika Korps, with Rommel at its head.

When Rommel arrived in Africa in February 1941, the Italians were facing certain defeat. By June, the elusive Rommel and his outmanned, undersupplied Afrika Korps had not only saved the Italians, but were ranging across the vast spaces of Libya, Tunisia, and Egypt, tangling with the British Army's finest units and often beating their superior numbers.

With the Wehrmacht plunging deeply into the Soviet Union in the summer of 1941, Nazi Germany seemed to be unstoppable. It was Japan's attack on the United States in December of that year, and America's subsequent entry into the war, that would prove to be the undoing of the Axis powers.

A week after Japanese bombs fell on Pearl Harbor, Eisenhower was summoned to Washington, DC, where he became Army Chief of Staff George C. Marshall's operations officer and most trusted advisor. His first assignment was to determine if the Japanese invasion of the Philippines could be turned back. It was an impossible task, and MacArthur only barely escaped to Australia before the enemy closed in on his Corregidor headquarters.

Although Japan had struck the first blow, President Franklin Roosevelt realized that Germany represented the greater threat, for if Britain and the Soviet Union fell the United States would be forced to face the Axis powers alone. But it would take time before Americans would be capable of taking on the Germans. In 1941, the United States was a third-rate power with a small military and obsolete equipment. Invasions against Japanese-held islands in the Pacific would have to be America's sole combat contribution to the war effort until millions of men could be drafted, trained, and sent to face Hitler's legions.

Meanwhile, Rommel's Afrika Korps and the Italian divisions attached to it, despite being hampered by a shortage of men and materiel, dashed along the southern coast of the Mediterranean, creating havoc among the British. By the end of January 1942, the "Desert Fox," as the wily Rommel became known to his British adversaries, had fought the British to a stalemate. The British began pouring more resources into the desert campaign, which Hitler was unable to match because of the meat grinder his war with Russia

had become.

In February 1942, Marshall made Eisenhower head of the War Plans Division. Ike immersed himself in the job, often putting in 14- to 16-hour days, six or seven days a week. As the Americans began working closely with the British to formulate a strategy for taking the war to Hitler, Marshall saw that Eisenhower not only had brains but

also the ability to work smoothly with the haughty British high command, which viewed the Yanks as little more than amateurs when it came to all things military.

Moreover, Ike had the "big picture" in mind—how to win the war—and refused to allow petty details to distract him or deflect his focus. As early as March 1942, he and his staff had drawn up the

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ABOVE: Four months ahead of D-Day, General Eisenhower, Supreme Commander of Allied Forces, fires a Browning Heavy Machine Gun—displaying his common touch—with a group of American infantrymen in southern England on February 5, 1944. OPPOSITE: Field Marshal Rommel inspects an Atlantic Wall artillery battery in Normandy in early 1944. Fearing an Allied invasion of occupied Europe, Hitler had in 1942 ordered the construction of more than 3,000 miles of bunkers, gun emplacements and other obstacles along the Atlantic and North Sea shores, from France through Belgium, the Netherlands and Denmark to Norway. As the invasion appeared imminent and more southerly, Rommel was given the task of boosting Germany's defenses. He ordered the planting of more than 5 million mines along the beaches of Normandy and stationed more than 2,000 tanks, assault cannons and tank destroyers along its coastline.



AFFP

broad outlines of an operation for the invasion of northwest Europe called “Roundup,” which would later be revised and expanded to become “Overlord.” It was assumed that Roundup would be under Marshall’s command, with Eisenhower as his chief of staff. Marshall, however, had other ideas.

In May 1942, he sent Eisenhower to England to observe British maneuvers and develop relations with the British brass. The following month, Marshall informed Ike that he would command the European Theater of Operations and the buildup of American forces in Britain. It was a wise choice. With the exception of the irascible General Sir Alan Brooke, chief of the Imperial General Staff (who disliked Americans in general and judged Eisenhower to be affable but ineffective and wholly unsuited for the top job), the British were enthusiastically impressed by Ike.

The war in North Africa had sapped Rommel’s strength and spirit. In the fall of 1942, suffering from exhaustion and severe intestinal problems, Rommel was recalled to Germany by Hitler. While

recuperating at home, Rommel began to have his first doubts about Germany’s ability to win the war and Hitler’s fitness as commander in chief.

Taking advantage of Rommel’s absence, the British forces launched a new offensive aimed at destroying Panzerarmee Afrika, under Jürgen von Arnim. The situation became so serious that Hitler personally requested that Rommel return to the front. The Desert Fox was appalled at what he found at the end of October: The barest trickle of supplies was reaching Africa from Italy and his men were in deplorable condition. In early November, the British hurled back his counterattacks and broke through his defensive lines, forcing Rommel to do something he had rarely done before—withdraw. Although the British knew of Rommel’s plans, thanks to the secret Ultra intercepts of the enemy’s messages, Montgomery was unable to trap the wily Desert Fox.

Time was not on the Allies’ side. Fearing that the Soviets would soon collapse under the German onslaught, Marshall and Eisenhower cam-

paigned for an invasion of France in 1943 to relieve the pressure on the Russians, while Brooke argued for an invasion of French North Africa. Brooke won, and in November 1942 Operation Torch was mounted. Under Eisenhower, some 67,000 Americans landed at three points along the Moroccan and Algerian coasts.

The American introduction to combat did not go well. Ike exhibited signs of indecision, and Maj. Gen. Lloyd Fredendall’s II Corps was severely mauled at Kasserine Pass, Faid Pass, and Gafsa by von Arnim’s 100,000-man Panzerarmee Afrika and Rommel’s 70,000-man Afrika Korps. Ike replaced Fredendall with the more aggressive George S. Patton, Jr., who had led the task force that landed in Morocco.

Despite heavy casualties and serious errors in execution over the next six months, the North African campaign turned out to be a successful laboratory for Ike, who learned how to command a large force, and for the green American units and their commanders, who learned that the Ger-



ABOVE: Field Marshal Erwin Rommel (right) inspects members of the 21st Panzer Division's Assault Gun Battalion standing in front of their guns in Normandy, France, several weeks before the Allied invasion. **OPPOSITE:** General Dwight D. Eisenhower chats with paratroopers of the 101st Airborne Division prior to their departure on D-day. The 101st was one of three Allied airborne divisions assigned to seize key objectives in the predawn hours of the invasion.

mans were not supermen. By May 1943, working in sometimes hostile cooperation with each other, the Americans and British cornered Rommel's Axis armies into northeast Tunisia and pummeled them into defeat.

But Rommel was no longer there. In November 1942, with his armies in North Africa crumbling, Hitler recalled the ill and despondent Rommel. He had a new, even more important assignment for him: preventing an Allied invasion of Fortress Europe.

Despite the Allied victory in North Africa, Eisenhower's work was not finished. The British and Americans decided to knock Italy out of the war, and the island of Sicily was the stepping-stone the Allies needed. With one successful operation under his belt, Ike was tabbed to orchestrate the Sicily operation, code-named "Husky."

In July 1943, in the biggest air-sea assault to date, eight Allied infantry and two airborne divisions stormed Sicily. It took a month of hard fighting to secure the island. Eisenhower and the American troops were gaining confidence in their abilities.

Just as Rommel had been plucked out of North Africa to prepare a defense against an Allied invasion of Europe, so Eisenhower was whisked off to England to head up the organization that would face Rommel: the Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEF). The invasion of Italy at Salerno would be left to Lt. Gen. Mark Clark.

Ike faced a daunting challenge once he arrived in London. Not only was he tasked with eventually inserting over a million men into France, but SHAEF had to plan for supplying the force with every bullet, shell, rifle, howitzer, jeep, truck, tank, tire, bandage, C-ration, drop of gasoline, and countless other items the troops would need once they got there.

If anything was more imposing than the strategic, tactical, and logistical headaches, it was the challenge of engendering a spirit of cooperation between the brash Americans and the cantankerous British, who often seemed more like enemies than allies. The British were naturally resentful of America's late arrival to the war and disdainful of the

Yanks' less-than-stellar combat performances in North Africa. Forging a coalition between the two sides would tax Eisenhower's patience to the limit, and he would, on more than one occasion, threaten to quit unless the bickering and rivalries ceased.

By September 1943, with the German U-boat menace in the Atlantic at last neutralized, men and supplies began to flow unchecked from the United States to Britain. Huge supply depots and Army camps sprang up in the bucolic British countryside. Special equipment, such as swimming tanks, artificial harbors, and underwater pipelines, was developed. The initial assault wave of some 175,000 heavily armed, highly motivated U.S., British, Canadian, and Free French soldiers—some that had seen action in North Africa, Sicily, and elsewhere—practiced the craft of war incessantly on the beaches and in the hills of southern England.

To confuse the Germans as to the point of invasion, a dummy army—complete with dummy tents, tanks, trucks, and landing craft—was assembled near the southeastern tip of Eng-

land, where the English Channel was the narrowest and where Hitler and his generals were convinced the Allies were most likely to cross. Heading this dummy army was a real general, George Patton, whom the Germans regarded as their most formidable foe. Eisenhower, they thought, was too cautious to attempt an invasion anywhere else along the French coast. They also believed Eisenhower would launch the invasion only if perfect weather conditions prevailed.

Rommel, as commander of Army Group B, could not afford to put all his defensive eggs in the Pas de Calais basket; he had over 300 miles of coastline along the English Channel from Cherbourg to Calais to defend. Even before the invasion, he warned his subordinate commanders to be aware that the Allies might use unconventional means to breach the coastal defenses—means such as swimming tanks, artificial harbors, and swarms of parachute and glider-borne troops. To defend against them, he wanted 200 million mines planted; hundreds of reinforced concrete pillboxes, bunkers, and tank traps constructed; thousands of anti-landing craft obstacles

erected; and uncountable kilometers of barbed wire uncoiled.

He wanted thousands of machine guns, mortars, flamethrowers, and artillery pieces placed and pre-registered to cover every square foot of coastline. He wanted hundreds of thousands of skilled, fanatical soldiers to man the weapons and guard every conceivable landing spot. He wanted vast, mobile reserves of panzers standing by near the coast, ready to repel the invasion at a moment's notice. He wanted the Luftwaffe's planes on alert, and the Kriegsmarine's ships and sailors at battle stations.

What he got was far less than what he wanted or needed.

Furthermore, he was handcuffed by the Nazis' cumbersome command structure and the fact that certain units, mainly the panzer divisions, were under Hitler's personal control. Rommel could not order the panzers to move without the Führer's direct approval. Other units that Rommel needed to throw the Allies back into the sea were also not available to him; they were either controlled by Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler; General Leo Freiherr Geyr von Schweppenburg,

commander of Panzer Group West; or General Field Marshal Gerd von Rundstedt, Commander in Chief, West. Neither were the Navy and Air Force at his beck and call. Because every commander had his own pet theory on where and when the Allies would strike and how best to employ their units, no one was willing to give up control of their limited resources to Rommel.

Adding to Rommel's worries, few of the troops manning the Normandy bunkers and trenches were "crack" soldiers, ready to die for the Fatherland. Many were old, out of shape, or recuperating veterans from other fronts. Many were not even German, but conscripts picked up on the Russian front who had decided that holding a rifle for Hitler was better than being incarcerated in a hellish POW camp.

Rommel faced another obstacle, perhaps the biggest one of all. He had built his reputation on the boldness of his attacks, the swiftness of his mobile forces, and the surprise of his tactics. Now he was being asked to become a master of static, defensive warfare, an assignment that went against the very grain of his aggressive nature.



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Growing despondent over his lack of control in the event of invasion, Rommel confided his deepest fears to Fritz Bayerlein, commander of the Panzer Lehr Division: "We have lost the initiative, of that there is no doubt ... total victory is now, of course, hardly a possibility." He began to lend tacit support to plotters who were planning to assassinate Hitler.

As the unannounced date of the invasion drew near, Rommel constantly inspected the coastal defenses and found fault with the slow progress of the work and the troops' state of readiness. He endlessly criticized and berated the men.

By contrast, Eisenhower spent much of his time (when he could extract himself from his crushing schedule) visiting the troops, encouraging them, and beaming at their eagerness for battle. One day, after he told a unit not to worry, a sergeant piped up: "Hell, we ain't worried, General. It's the Krauts that ought to be worrying now."

In his Southwick House headquarters near the great naval base at Portsmouth, Eisenhower and the SHAEF staff set the date of invasion as June 5, 1944. Only on that date, and the following two, was the combination of tides and moon ideal. Any change in the weather could seriously disrupt the timetable, postponing the invasion by two weeks or more and risking its detection by German spies.

The weather did change, and for the worse. June 5 saw a terrible storm raging across southern England, the Channel, and Normandy. Troops were crammed into their transports, listening to sheets of rain pelting down, feeling the ships rocked by wind and waves. There seemed to be no way the invasion could begin.

Across the Channel, Rommel saw and felt the same storm at his palatial headquarters at LaRoche-Guyon, northwest of Paris. Informed that the storm would last for several days, he made a fateful decision. He would fly back to Germany for his wife's birthday, June 6, and then go on to meet with Hitler to discuss the situation in Normandy. Also planned for the 6th were war games at Rennes, some 90 miles southwest of Normandy, where unit commanders and staff officers were already gathering.

The absence of so many key commanders would seriously undermine the Germans' ability to counter the invasion. It was almost as though Providence were taking a hand in the coming battle.

Even while the storm was battering Southwick House, RAF Group Captain J.M. Stagg, SHAEF's chief meteorologist, gave Ike and the SHAEF brass a startlingly optimistic forecast. A brief window of opportunity was approaching, and for a few crucial hours the storm would let up long enough for the invasion to begin. The



Both: National Archives



ABOVE: General Eisenhower confers with Maj. Gen. Clarence Huebner, commander of the U.S. 1st Infantry Division (left) and Lt. Gen. Omar N. Bradley (right), commander of the American First Army, in Normandy. This photo was taken on July 2, 1944, a month after the D-day invasion. TOP: From the deck of a warship in the English Channel, General Eisenhower scans the horizon along the coastline of France June 7, 1944. Eisenhower managed to maintain a sometimes tenuous partnership between the British and American Allies.

agonizing decision, one that would change the course of the war and world history, was made by a much-conflicted Ike. Was he sending the minutely planned, carefully crafted, and endlessly rehearsed invasion to its doom? Or would launching the invasion in the teeth of a gale take the

enemy by surprise? Despite his deep misgivings, Ike gave the order to proceed.

At home in Germany when he received the news that the invasion had begun, Rommel knew that his decision to absent himself from Normandy had been a terrible blunder. He saw that defeat for his

beloved Fatherland was inevitable, for it was Eisenhower, not Rommel, who had made the audacious move, who had pulled off the surprise.

Victory, however, did not come easily. The invasion came out of a rough sea and cloudy sky, but very little went according to plan. At Utah Beach, the 4th Infantry Division landed in the wrong place. At Omaha Beach, the Air Force and Navy badly overshot their targets, leaving enemy positions virtually untouched.

Most of the swimming tanks foundered and sank, the airborne units were impossibly scattered, and most of the seaborne infantry troops, besides being horribly seasick, were landed far from their assigned sectors. Those who made it to shore were subjected to hours of unrelenting gunfire and shelling. Only the British-Canadian beaches (Gold, Juno, and Sword) were without serious mishap.

Despite all the problems and errors, within the span of a morning all of Rommel's carefully constructed defenses from the base of the Cotentin Peninsula to the mouth of the Orne River had been breached by the initial wave of Allied soldiers, and none of Rommel's or Hitler's subsequent actions could throw back the invaders.

In one day, the Allies had deposited over 23,000 airborne troops behind enemy lines, and some 57,500 American and 75,000 British and Canadian troops, along with a small contingent of French commandos and men from other nations, had waded ashore at Normandy and were driving inland.

Given the size of the landings, all the things that went wrong, and the magnitude of the German defenses, it seems surprising that Allied casualties were not considerably heavier. All told, some 2,500 men were killed or wounded, most of them at Omaha.

Chess experts say that the first move, the "opening gambit," will often decide the eventual outcome. With Eisenhower's and Rommel's opening moves, the outcome of the giant chess match that was Operation Overlord was sealed. Ike, the normally cautious commander who had never led troops in battle, had made a bold, spectacular move and had won; Rommel, the battle-hardened commander famous for his dash and daring, had lost. Although it would be 11 months before checkmate was declared, the end result was determined on the chess board of Normandy on June 6, 1944.

EPILOGUE

Rommel's fortunes swiftly plummeted. On July 17, 1944, he was gravely wounded in Normandy when his staff car was strafed near Vimoutiers by British aircraft. Three days later, a bomb planted by a German officer to assassinate Hitler at his East Prussia headquarters only wounded him; a



Commander of Army Group B, Field Marshal Erwin Rommel, left, and the commander of the 1st SS Panzer Corps, SS-Obergruppenführer and Colonel General of the SS troops, Josef Dietrich, at the front during the Allied invasion of Normandy. This is believed to be one of the last images of Rommel in the field before he was wounded on July 17 when a British plane strafed his staff car. After being implicated in a plot to assassinate Hitler, Rommel committed suicide on October 14 in order to spare the lives of his wife and son. He was also given a state funeral and his suspected disloyalty was not revealed.

vengeful Hitler and his henchmen rounded up and executed the plotters.

Implicated in the plot, Rommel was forced to commit suicide on October 14, 1944. In exchange for taking poison, the lives of his wife and son were spared, and Rommel, whose suspected disloyalty was not revealed to the general public, was given a hero's state funeral.

Since the war, his failure to throw back the irresistible Allied tide at Normandy has not dimmed the consensus that Rommel was a military genius; the atrocities of Nazism that tainted other German generals have not stained his reputation as a fierce and noble warrior. As historian Martin Blumenson wrote, "His devotion to the profession of arms was in the best tradition of the gentleman.... With his eye constantly on victory, he refused to be deterred from action by obstacles that more reasonable men deemed were too great to overcome."

After the war, Eisenhower became the Army's

chief of staff, retiring in 1947 to become president of Columbia University. Riding the crest of his success as Supreme Allied Commander, the immensely popular Ike was swept into the American presidency in 1952, served two terms, and became a champion for peace while simultaneously attempting to counter the aggressive moves of the Soviet Union, Red China, and North Vietnam.

A heavy smoker since his cadet days, Ike lost the battle against heart disease and died on March 28, 1969. He was laid to rest in the Eisenhower Chapel in Abilene, Kan., and remains today one of America's most beloved leaders.

As his biographer Stephen Ambrose noted, "It can be argued that no man elected to the Presidency was ever better prepared for the demands of the job than Eisenhower. The man who organized and commanded Overlord was confident that he could organize and run the United States as it faced the challenges of the Cold War." ■

The *Rakkasans*—a nickname meaning “falling umbrella” picked up during their occupation of Japan—land near Munsan-Ni, Korea, on March 23, 1951. The paratroopers from the 187th Airborne Infantry Regiment, part of the Army’s 101st Airborne Division are preparing for an assault on Hill 205 along the Imjin River.





OPERATION TOMAHAWK: SLAMMING THE DOOR

U.S. Army Rangers make their second combat jump in history during U.N. efforts in Korea to cut off retreating Communist forces in the Spring of 1951. | BY KELLY BELL

The first two tanks crossed the small Chang-nung river in one piece. As the third was splashing across, though, it hit a mine the first two had barely missed. The armored column ground to a halt as engineers swept the area with mine detectors and dug up a sobering number of infernal machines the Chinese had expertly sowed before withdrawing. With sappers and their detectors leading the way, the convoy slowly made it to the village of Sinwon by 9 a.m. on March 23, 1951. Here the detectors began to beep again, once more forcing the column to a halt. By this time paratroopers were jumping outside the town of Munsan-ni 19 miles to the north. With the ground forces bogged down, the paras would have to do a great deal themselves.

The ebb and flow of the Korean War had momentarily stagnated. Just as the Chinese seemed about to overrun all of South Korea, Gen. Douglas MacArthur's timely amphibious landing at Inchon had sliced into the Communist flank and sent

them reeling northward with United Nations (UN) forces pursuing them all the way to the Yalu River, North Korea's border with Red China. Earlier, discounted reports delivered through diplomatic channels out of India that the Chinese would not tolerate Free World military forces so close to their home soil were vindicated when hordes of Chinese forces counterattacked the forward western elements, driving them back to the south before UN forces were able to establish a strong defensive line roughly along the 38th Parallel.

It was a bitter shock for the Americans and their allies. In defiance of previous, disparaging intelligence evaluations of Mao Tse-Tung's military, the Chinese soldiers now in Korea fought hard and well. The majority of these troops were seasoned combat veterans, toughened by years of fighting first the Japanese, and later the Nationalist Army of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-Shek during the Chinese Civil War. If their communications and air support were lacking, they more

than made up for it through their sheer numbers, ferocity and the combat savvy of their senior officers, many of whom had been at war for 20 years. They may have been fought to a standstill by March of 1951, but there was no doubt they planned to keep up the pressure, and there were so many of them. Their numbers along with their North Korean comrades then deployed between the Han and Imjin rivers north of Seoul were too great a threat for the UN and Republic of (South) Korea's (ROK) forces to ignore.

U.S. 8th Army commanding General Mathew Ridgway conceived of Operation Courageous as a means of neutralizing the worrisome Communist enclave between these rivers. The American 25th and 3rd Infantry divisions and the ROK 1st Infantry Division were to advance northward to Munsan-ni, and then veer east while the paratroopers came down from the north, trapping the enemy between the two allied forces. The paradrop was designated Operation Tomahawk, and would uti-



ABOVE: A tank crew of the 64th Heavy Tank Battalion supporting the 3rd Infantry Division moves out on March 23, 1951, as part of the ground forces of Task Force Hawkins under Gen. Robert H. Soule as part of Operation Courageous. This was part of the ground forces, along with Task Force Growden, that would rendezvous with the paratroopers dropped as part of Operation Tomahawk with the intent of trapping retreating Chinese People's Volunteer Army (PVA) and Korean People's Army (KPA) troops between the Han and Imjin Rivers north of Seoul. **OPPOSITE:** Paratroopers prepare to load into Fairchild C-119 Flying Boxcars at Taegu Airfield for an early morning jump northwest of Seoul on March 23, 1951, to cut off communist forces trying to cross the Imjin River and escape into North Korea.



lize the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team (RCT), an excellent choice for the assignment.

The 187th had been in Korea since the fall of 1950 and had performed exceptionally well. After heavy fighting in the bitter cold central mountains near Wonju in January, the regiment was sent to Taegu Airfield to prepare for imminent airborne operations. A scheduled jump north of Chuncheon was scrubbed when UN ground forces overran the target area ahead of schedule. The RCT's training for this cancelled assignment, however, turned out to be appropriate for Operation Tomahawk. The regiment received notice of its new assignment on March 16. They were originally slated to jump on the 20th, but it became obvious this was too soon to make even the bare minimum of preparations. The attack was re-scheduled for the 23rd.

Reconnaissance indicated the Chinese and North Koreans were fortifying their positions north of Seoul, and showing no inclination to withdraw. The North Korean units nearest Seoul were in the most vulnerable position because their route of potential retreat was blocked by the deep and virtually unfordable Imjin River. The key to the success of the interrelated Operations Courageous/Tomahawk was the 187th's occupation of the area around Munsan-ni. In this scenario the

Reds would be essentially encircled by the 187th, the advancing ground units of Operation Courageous and the river.

The 187th, bolstered by elements of the 2nd and 4th Ranger companies, would drop into their assigned area at the same time a ground force from the U.S. I Corps advanced to the northwest from Seoul. Commanded by Lt.-Col. John Growdon, the mechanized Task Force Growdon—composed of the 6th Medium Tank Battalion; 2nd Battalion, 7th Infantry Regiment; all but one battery of the 58th Armored Field Artillery Battalion; a battery of the 999th Armored Field Artillery Battalion; Company A of the 14th Engineer Battalion; and two bridge-laying Churchill tanks from the British 29th Brigade—would link up with the 187th within 24 hours of the drop. It would be a monumental task for the paratroops to hold out for that long.

The rush to launch the operation left little time to prepare and the men received only the barest briefing on the drop zone. There was no time for aerial reconnaissance but, through herculean efforts, technical information was delivered to the battalion by noon on March 22. Ridgway and his staff worked on the project's details until 1 a.m. of the 23rd, making it possible to deliver crucial data to participating junior officers in time for

them to share it with their men.

About 15,000 soldiers of the North Korean I Corps would oppose the American I Corps on the left flank. The Communist units were armed with an uncertain number of medium tanks, self-propelled guns and heavy machine guns. The North Korean I Corps had been busy during the past week defending itself against constant pressure from the American I Corps. Judging from the volume of fire still coming from the Communists here and the heavy gunfire directed at UN aircraft passing over their positions it appeared these North Koreans still had sufficient ordnance for both defensive and mobile combat. There was also the possibility they might be reinforced.

The 8th and 47th North Korean Rifle Divisions were ensconced about 10 miles southeast of their I Corps comrades. There were also elements of the Chinese 27th and 50th armies holed up in a valley about 15 miles away outside Uijeongbu. Should these three Communist enclaves manage to merge into one in the Munsan-ni area, operations Courageous and Tomahawk could end up resembling Custer's attack at Little Bighorn. To prevent this, it was decided the attempt would have to be made as soon as possible and regardless of the opposition's strength—not only because of the value of the objective (Munsan-ni) but



ABOVE: Paratroopers of the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team, which included the 2nd and 4th Army Ranger Companies, sweat out the flight to the dropzone at Munsan-ni in the cargo hold of a C-119 Flying Boxcar from the 314th Troop Carrier Group. The jump, codenamed Operation Tomahawk took place in Korea on March 23, 1951. **LEFT:** General Matthew Ridgway, appointed commander of the Eighth U.S. Army in late December 1950, oversaw Operations Courageous and Tomahawk in March 1951. **FAR LEFT:** Major Ronald Speirs, who famously led "Easy" Company during the Battle of the Bulge was a member of the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team in Korea.



because of the immediate threat these hostiles posed to nearby Seoul. The target location was too significant to not hold.

Munsan-ni was a vital railroad crossroads and communications center. Whoever held the area was in a position to use adjacent high ground as artillery sites to monitor local flats, ferry crossings, road and riverine approaches, the sector's inland areas, river islands as well as the valley approaches from the south. Deep ravines throughout the area provide excellent protection for defensive lines, or staging points for attacks.

The terrain in the south and east was ideal for rapid movement of troops and equipment of all kinds. To the north, the Imjin blocked resupply efforts. This type of terrain required any attacking force to rapidly clear the objective of the enemy before setting up on high ground and/or the brushy ravines, and utilizing these same features to meet potential counterattacks. The flat terrain to the west, south and east required quick fortification because it was ideal for the transit of tanks. Although as much of this information as possible was shared with the 187th's officers,

there was insufficient time to meticulously brief the majority of the rank-and-file who would be making the actual jump. This meant reliable communications between the combat zone and headquarters would be of paramount importance in order to correctly deploy the troops after they landed. For the UN forces preparing for this operation, March 22 was a very busy day. At 7:15 a.m. the next day planes began taking off from Taegu airfield. By 9 a.m., precisely on schedule, they began unloading their human cargo. But the drop was not without incident.

Engine trouble forced the lead plane to abort. The pilots of the following planes had not been briefed on where to unload the paras, but were told simply to drop the men on the same mark as the lead plane. The following pilots had to make their best guess on the location of the drop zone, resulting in the entire 1st Battalion being dropped about five miles north of its assigned area, in among the already-landed soldiers of the 3rd Battalion. Despite the glut of troops in the northern zone the units managed to deploy relatively quickly (being completely organized according to plan by 12:15) and start fighting.

“The northern DZ was initially saturated with personnel due to the 1st Battalion’s accidental drop,” Major Ronald C. Speirs later recalled of the situation in the crowded north, “This hampered the assembly of the 3rd Battalion as there were too many men at the assembly point, which was the northwest sector of the DZ. The initial mission of the 3rd Battalion was to secure the DZ, and this was accomplished. Forty to 50 enemy were killed and wounded by the battalion.”

At noon, the 3rd Battalion’s 4th Ranger Com-

pany assaulted Hill 205 in order to neutralize mortar crews who had been shelling the battalion since it landed. Not waiting for assembly to be complete, Company I struck out toward Munsan-ni at 9:30 a.m. The unit’s first assignment was the capture and fortification of Hill 86. They accomplished their task in 30 minutes, killing 8 and taking 21 prisoners. Tomahawk was officially underway.

As the U.S. units were assembling, Ridgway arrived via light aircraft to personally oversee the operation’s initial stages. His first command post had to relocate due to mortar and small arms fire. From his new location he began issuing orders aimed at thoroughly securing the DZ for following units, sending elements of the 3rd Battalion to the east and north. At this point some late-arriving troops parachuted almost on top of Ridgway’s CP. Forty-five minutes after the first soldiers had jumped, the sector was secure and its units operational despite intermittent mortar rounds. For the 1st Battalion the situation was more precarious.

The sole planeload of 1st Battalion paratroopers had also missed their mark, coming down in

the midst of a sizable concentration of hostiles. The Americans immediately came under fire from Chinese troops atop Hill 216 and an adjacent ridge, but called down an air strike that silenced these positions. This enabled part of the 1st Battalion to leave the DZ and deploy, but the clock was ticking.

As it turned out, not all Communist troops on Hill 216 had been killed by the air strike, and the 3rd Battalion, 2nd Platoon, under a Captain Miller waged a violent firefight for the position from noon until 1 p.m. The platoon occupied the hill and radioed instructions to comrades deploying in the surrounding countryside as, to the north, the pace was quickening.

After landing and assembling, the 2nd Battalion wasted no time in moving against its objective—the high ground north of the DZ. By 10 a.m. these men had moved out for their point of interest—specifically a high ridge overlooking a railroad tunnel about 2,000 yards north of Munsan-ni. Although bedevilled by mortar fire these troops pressed steadily forward, splashing across a rice paddy and engaging the enemy at the foot



With the 2nd and 4th Army Ranger Companies leading the way, the 187th RCT “Rakkasans” jumped behind enemy lines from 120 C-119 Flying Boxcar and C-46 transport aircraft in Operation Tomahawk on March 23, 1951.



of the hill. Most of the North Koreans taken captive turned out to be recent conscripts no more than 15 and 16 years old, who put up little resistance. As soon as the Americans took these defenses, they came under sporadic artillery fire from what seemed to be self-propelled guns. By 5 p.m. the sector was cleared of North Koreans, with 35 of them killed and 22 captured. An hour later adjacent Hill 65 was secured. The overall operation was still gathering momentum.

The northern sector was a cauldron of combat. The 4th Ranger Company ran into serious opposition when it moved against its objective—Hill 205. The elevation overlooked two fords on the Imjin, which the Communists could use for either retreat or reinforcement.

After jumping at 9:17 a.m. the paras came down in a dry rice paddy outside a hamlet called Ich'on-ni and assembled on the northwest side of a road paralleling the drop zone. After accounting for about 90 percent of his troops Capt. Dorsey Anderson led his command toward Hill 205, about 1,700 yards northeast of the drop zone. The company had been under small arms and mortar fire since landing, but this interdiction was so inaccurate it did little to hamper the soldiers as they deployed. The elevation was made up of several long ridges the men had come to call "The Fingers"



ABOVE: Part of Task Force Growdown, a tank crew examines their Sherman after it hit a mine on March 23, 1951. The TF met no enemy resistance along Route 1, but was delayed in meeting up with airborne forces near Munsan-ni by having to lift or explode more than 150 mines, ultimately losing four tanks. A five-mile stretch of dummy mines—buried C-rations and beer cans—delayed them further. **TOP:** Paratroopers of the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team, who were accompanied by the 2nd and 4th Rangers in jumping behind enemy lines on March 23, 1951, are fired upon as they cross a field near Munsan-ni, Korea. Operation Tomahawk was part of an effort to trap Communist forces between the Han and Imjin rivers, north of Seoul. Though most of the enemy had already retreated north, the operation was considered a success.



Paratroopers of the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team prepare to charge over a ridge east of Munsan-ni during Operation Tomahawk in Korea in March 1951.

during pre-attack briefings. Fourth Company's 1st Platoon started up the middle finger, while 3rd Platoon started climbing up the one just north of it to the left. Both fingers were unoccupied by the enemy. The company then advanced in force up the remaining fingers until encountering concentrated defensive fire from the hill's summit. Under cover fire from the rest of the company, the 1st Platoon continued slowly up the slope with the intent of forming assault positions. The rocky, irregular promontory was difficult to assault due to its having just one narrow approach to the top.

First Platoon continued its assault, but as its lead elements reached the peak the men, one after another, began to run out of ammunition for their small arms. By noon the platoon was forced to retreat, dragging 13 wounded, under cover of two men using a Browning Automatic Rifle and an M-1 carbine as clubs. Anderson had 2nd Platoon trade places with 1st Platoon while 3rd Platoon moved against an adjacent village called Sin'gong-

ni, where heavy defensive fire pinned it down.

With his advance grinding to a halt, Anderson was relieved to have a mortar crew report to him and commence an accurate shelling of the hill's defensive positions. He then called for an air strike to augment the mortaring, but the response was actually too fast. Four F-51 Mustangs strafed and rocketed the hilltop, but the aerial interdiction was premature because it came before 2nd Platoon had time to deploy for a charge. Anderson assembled his strike force and called for another softening-up air strike, with napalm. The Mustangs and some F-80 Shooting Stars quickly returned, but without napalm. After the pilots strafed and fired all their rockets at the defenders they departed. Anderson quickly sent his men against the defenses, but again heavy defensive fire met the GIs, forcing them to hit the cold dirt. It seemed the airmen had missed the main defenses on both their attacks. Anderson recalled his men. One of his platoons was out of ammunition, and the other

two were pinned down by not only the defenses atop Hill 205, but by hostile units on neighboring Hills 200 and 208. At 3:45 p.m. the 4th Ranger Company joined with Company I, which had moved into positions to the right. At 9 p.m. elements of the 4th Ranger Company moved to positions 1,000 yards southwest of Sin'gong-ni to link up with friendly forces and fill a gap in the perimeter. The Americans settled in for the night.

At dawn on March 24, the 4th Ranger Company launched a resolute attack with 2nd Platoon in the vanguard. During the night the 674th Airborne Field Artillery Battalion and the 999th Field Artillery Battalion had shelled the hilltop. The Chinese and North Korean troops had actually used the barrages as cover to slip away in the darkness, leaving behind seven of their dead, two heavy machine guns, two light machine guns and a copious cache of ammunition. Anderson and his men met no resistance when they swarmed onto the peak that morning.



An undated photo of Republic of Korea Army (ROK) I Corps troops advancing past a burning village on their way to support paratroopers of the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team.

The occupation of Hill 205 ended the fighting in and around the drop zone. Still, the Reds had not been trapped. The operation's ground forces had to get moving.

Growdon's armor-infantry task force advancing from Seoul ahead of the main body of I Corps troops, was given 24 hours to link up with the 187th Airborne Regiment at Munsan-ni. After meticulous preparations the task forces moved out from Seoul at 5:30 a.m. on March 23.

Slowed by mines, blown bridges and by scrap metal the Communists had ingeniously buried in the road to set off mine detectors and force sappers to halt the column while they lost time digging up hubcaps, a frustrated Growdon, at 11 a.m., sent a tank platoon ahead of the main column through a dry riverbed. After rumbling just 2,000 yards this mini-column blundered into and was halted by yet more mines. Just before noon Growden ordered Team D of the 6th Medium Tank Battalion to veer westward in an unsuccessful attempt to locate an alternate route to Munsan-ni. It was 5:30 p.m. before the task force made radio contact with the 187th. Yet more mines and increasing small arms and mortar fire further slowed Growdon to the point he was not able to link up with the 187th until 5 a.m. on March 24. It had been an expensive

trek for TF Growdon, which lost four M-46 tanks, one quarter-ton truck and an armored car to mines. Two M-46 tanks had also been disabled by artillery fire. After the two UN forces merged, they were re-supplied by a truck convoy and conducted relatively uneventful patrols in search of any substantial, enemy presence nearby. By nightfall it was clear the way was open for the eastward advance, but time was running out.

As part of Operation Courageous, Tomahawk's main purpose was to prevent the Chinese from withdrawing across the Imjin River. The linkup of the 187th and the armored forces at Munsan-ni had been too late to prevent that from happening. The 187th's advance was so slowed by a multitude of mines, however, that it took too long advancing with the intent of attacking the Chinese forces' rear area. Furthermore, it was now preoccupied with unavoidable resupply efforts. Still, its commanders remained determined to try and close with their foes.

The 187th struck out eastward at 6:20 p.m. on March 24, slowed by poor roads and driving rain. It was dawn on the 25th before the column began to encounter the Chinese. The Communist forces had apparently received inaccurate intelligence on the advancing Americans, for they were set up

outside the town of Sinch'on to defend an attack from the south rather than the west, and withdrew eastward. The U.S. forces pursued, catching up with the rear of the Chinese column 1,000 yards farther down the road in the village of Parun-ni. Supported by heavy machine gun and field artillery the 187th pushed through Parun-ni and cleared an adjacent ridge line of dug-in infantry by noon. At 12:30, 20 Chinese died in a futile counterattack.

By this time the weather was causing both sides to have considerable difficulty with their weapons. M-1 rifles and carbines, BARs and most machine guns were soaked and inoperative, leaving the Americans little to fight with except handguns and grenades. Still, the column moved eastward in pursuit of the enemy, encountering Communist troops in increasing numbers in confused fighting against a surreal backdrop of violent electrical storms east of Parun-ni on the afternoon of March 25. The sounds of battle were frequently drowned out by peals of thunder—unsurprising considering much of the fighting was done with bayonets attached to waterlogged shoulder arms. At 1 p.m. the Chinese launched a determined counterattack against the 187th's Company G. Gunnery Sergeant Ervin Muldoon had somehow

managed to keep his heavy machine guns dry, and for two hours he expertly directed killing volleys at waves of hostile troops as they assaulted his unit from the front and both sides, exposing himself to hostile fire while he managed his weapons with

such skill that the massive counterattack failed. PFC Eugene Estep was particularly effective not only in reacting to Muldoon's direction, but in using his own initiative. When two men manning one of the .30-caliber machine guns were

wounded Estep grabbed the gun and moved it to a nearby spot where he had noticed a particularly heavy enemy concentration approaching. Opening fire on the attackers at the last possible moment, he poured sweeping volleys into them at near point-blank range, piling up heaps of Chinese dead in front of his position for 45 minutes until he was mortally wounded. Nearby, Muldoon did the same from his own cover-bereft position when a second gun's team was wounded, ignoring the danger as he hammered away at the frontal attack until he, too, was killed. By the time of their deaths Muldoon and Estep had virtually single-handedly broken the massed banzai-style attack.

"It wasn't just that he personally killed a lot of the enemy while risking his own life, nor was it the fact that he directed the fire in such a way as to break the back of the Chinese attack," Sergeant Earl Hinebaugh recalled. "Rather it was the leadership he displayed that made the difference. The valor and leadership he displayed are something of which the Army might well be proud."

Muldoon and Estep were both posthumously awarded the Distinguished Service Cross.

As soon as the last charge was beaten back, the Communists again fled eastward with the 187th in pursuit. Catching up at 4 a.m. on March 25 just outside Parun-ni, the Americans heavily engaged the enemy in a daylong firefight that ended with the Communists being forced off the ridges bracketing the town. By this point the rain had finally stopped, and with evening approaching the fighting died down as the Chinese again fled, laboriously and slowly along muddy roads, to the east. U.S. troops took advantage of the respite to meticulously clean their rain-soaked weapons and return them to combat readiness. It had been a tiring, tearing trek, but the men of the 187th steeled themselves to fight again in hopes of cutting the main road to Uijeongbu and trapping their quarry.

On the morning of the 26th the heavens opened again, soaking the area and slowing the 187th's pursuit while the Reds were coming under fire from the U.S. 3rd Division to the south. By nightfall the Regimental Combat Team was still three miles short of the Uijeongbu road. The following day dawned with clear skies and the column headed out for its next immediate objective—Hill 228 overlooking the Uijeongbu road. With the Communist forces now approaching and preoccupied with previously uninvolved American forces just to their south, the chances for the 187th reaching the road and trapping the Communists looked reasonable.

The plan was for the 187th's 1st and 3rd battalions to directly assault Hill 228 while the 2nd Battalion covered the attack's northern flank. The


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ABOVE: A paratrooper from 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team defends a position on Hill 148, which was secured on March 27, 1951. Just to the west, Hill 228, one of the main objectives, was taken by another unit of the 187th RCT the next day. **TOP:** An officer from the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team interrogates POWs near Munsan-ni, March 23, 1951.

THE BRITISH EMPIRE Returns to Sudan

In 1898, Field Marshal Herbert Kitchener led an Anglo-Egyptian army against 15,000 Mahdist rebels at the Battle of Atbara along the Nile River in Sudan. | BY KEVIN MORROW



Men from the Cameron Highlanders assault the thorn covered stockade walls of the Dervish Army's camp northeast of Khartoum during British General Herbert Kitchener's reconquest of Sudan in 1898.

Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection





Imperial War Museum

Just a few hours beyond sunset, the Anglo-Egyptian army stopped to rest, officers and men stretching out on blankets on the desert floor. A few hours later, orders to assemble whispered through the ranks. For half the night, the men would march in tight formation over the gravelly, uneven ground under the light of a waning moon.

A halt was called at 3:45 a.m. and, while some slept, others wondered in low voices—Were we there yet? Would the enemy fight or flee? If they resisted, how would we get over the high, thick palisade of thorns enclosing the enemy camp?

In fact, the enemy position along the Atbara River, a tributary of the mighty Nile River in east-central Sudan, lay barely a mile and a half away through the darkness. It was early morning on Good Friday, April 8, 1898, and this mixed fighting force of Englishmen, Scots, Egyptians, and Sudanese were facing one of the last remaining armies that had risen up in revolt in 1881 against Egyptian rule in Sudan.

When the rebel armies defeated the Egyptians and their British allies in 1885—capturing Khartoum, then Sudan’s capital and killing British garrison commander Gen. Charles Gordon—Anglo-

Egyptian forces were forced to completely evacuate the country. Now, 13 years later, they were back to finish what they had started.

An army commanded by British General Horatio Herbert Kitchener spent months slowly, methodically pushing its way south, seizing riverfront towns with relatively little resistance. Along the Atbara River later that morning, though, they would face the first serious battle of the campaign.

At sunrise, British war correspondent George Stevens remembered, “the word came, and the men sprang up. In one superb sweep, nearly 12,000 men moved forward towards the enemy. All England and all Egypt, and the flower of the black lands beyond ... all welded into one, the awful war machine went into action.”

The men could now see the enemy’s fortifications in the morning light as they advanced in a silence broken only by the crunch of boots on gravel and the low buzz of conversation among the ranks. They halted half a mile from the enemy’s front positions.

Then Kitchener’s artillery erupted in a thunderous barrage against the enemy camp. Stevens looked down at his watch. It was 6:20 a.m. He later wrote, “The battle that had now menaced,

now evaded us for a month . . . had begun.”

Seventeen years earlier in 1881, Sudan stood on the edge of revolt. Egypt had annexed Sudan in 1820, ruling through brutal, corrupt Egyptian governors and soldiers to extract wealth from the country through excessive taxation and by dominating the lucrative gold and ivory trades. Even more lucrative for the Egyptians was Sudan’s centuries-old slave trade that they now appropriated to fulfill their own manpower needs on sugar and cotton plantations in the Nile Delta and to fill the ranks of their army.

In the 1840s, European mercenaries and traders began coming to Sudan to enrich themselves through the commodity and slave trades. The barbarity of the Sudanese slave trade horrified the diplomats, missionaries, and humanitarians who came in their wake, and soon, the British public began loudly demanding that Egypt take action to abolish it.

The abolitionists’ political leverage had grown through the 1870s as Egypt’s ruler, Isma’il, became increasingly indebted to the European investors helping him to modernize his country. So eager was he to ingratiate himself that he willingly responded to the public outcry over the slave

trade by installing British provincial governors in Sudan tasked with destroying it. But the slave trade continued, as did the wretched poverty, drought, and brutal domination by foreigners that had troubled Sudan for decades.

Moved by the suffering of his people and the corruption of Islamic life, the Sufi Islamist cleric Muhammad Ahmad publicly declared himself the *Mahdi al Muntazar* (“the Expected Guide”) on June 29, 1881—as God’s messenger his mission was to redeem Sudan and the world for Islam through holy war. The local Egyptian governor tried to bribe him into quiescence by offering him a government stipend, but the Mahdi refused it. “He who follows me will be victorious,” he wrote to the governor. “He who does not believe in me will be purified by the sword.” Taking this as a declaration of war, the Egyptians went after Muhammad Ahmad and his growing army of Sufi cultists, Egyptian deserters, riverine farmers, and desert nomads known collectively as the “Dervishes.”

The fight did not go well for the Egyptians.

Facing impending defeat and the loss of Sudan, they called for help from the British, who had effectively annexed Egypt in 1882. But instead of sending troops to defend Egypt’s empire, Britain decided that Egypt should evacuate Sudan.

Egypt’s military leadership balked, refusing to implement the mass evacuation for reasons of national pride and the utter infeasibility of carrying it out through a country without roads. The British, then, had to send one of their own to do the job, the man that *Vanity Fair* called “the grandest Englishman now alive,” British military hero General Charles “Chinese” Gordon. This failed too, ending in the killing of Gordon and the capture of Khartoum in January 1885 by the Dervishes after a year-long siege. Five months later, the Mahdi was dead of typhus, and he was immediately succeeded by his chief subordinate, Abdullahi ibn Muhammad at-Taishi, who turned Sudan into an even more brutal autocracy as the khalifa (or “successor” in Arabic, a title used by the 7th century successors of the prophet Muhammad).

Britain quickly lost interest in Sudan, but disillusioned British Army veterans of the Sudan campaign including Herbert Kitchener (who in 1892 became the “sirdar,” or commander-in-chief of the Egyptian Army) began waging a campaign aimed at moving the British government to approve a rematch in Sudan. During the war, Kitchener had served as the critical communications link between Gordon, who he had greatly admired, and British Army headquarters in Cairo. He considered Gordon’s death and the loss of Sudan as a personal source of shame and a national disgrace that cried out for vengeance. The British government, alas, maintained what one critic called “a policy of do nothing,” fueled at least in part by doubts that reconquering Sudan would be worth the cost in arms and men.

Meanwhile, events in Africa would soon force Britain to complete its unfinished business there. Europe’s great powers—Britain, Germany, France, Belgium, and Portugal—had begun scrambling to seize spheres of influence across the African continent. This, with growing French

Imperial War Museum



ABOVE: General Kitchener, the “Sirdar” (commander of the Egyptian Army), center-right, in discussion with Major General Sir William Gatacre, commander of the British Brigade on the Nile at the start of the campaign. **OPPOSITE:** An armed group of Sudanese left behind in Berber by the Khalifa Abdullahi after their defeat at Abu Hamed in August 1897. An Egyptian Army MP poses in the foreground.



threats to territory along the southern reaches of the Nile closest to Egypt, forced Britain to strengthen its colonial presence for fear of losing territorial influence to its European competitors.

In May 1894, the British struck a critical agreement with the Belgians allowing them to “lease” the western bank of the White Nile from Fashoda in southern Sudan, to Lake Albert in Uganda. A couple of months later, the French claimed most of that territory as theirs, which constituted a threat to Britain’s publicly stated claim to the entirety of the Nile and its tributaries.

The Italian invasion of French-allied Abyssinia caused alarm in London when, in December 1895, and again in March 1896, the Abyssinians beat the Italians in battle. The national shame of the fall of Khartoum had not been enough to prod Britain into retaking Sudan, but successful French incursions into central Africa now forced Britain to act.

At 3 a.m. on March 13, 1896, Kitchener awoke to the sound of pebbles hitting his bedroom window at his official residence in Cairo. From the window he saw his night watchman standing beside his adjutant, Captain Jimmy Watson, who was waving a piece of paper.

Kitchener came down in his pajamas to find a cabled order from the British government in London via the Egyptian War Office. Reading by the watchman’s lamp, he saw he was directed to occupy the frontier post at the Sudanese town of Akasha, the southernmost point on British-held

Egypt’s border with Sudan. So overjoyed was Kitchener that he actually began dancing a jig, lamp in one hand and the cable in the other. The British reconquest of Sudan was on, and two days later, the first troops left Cairo for its journey south.

Arriving in Sudan, Kitchener experienced the problems with troop and supply transport that had bedeviled the British Army a decade before. At that time, the only options were to go upriver by boat (impossible during the winter when water levels were low) or cross the broiling desert on foot. Kitchener opted for neither, directing the Royal Engineers to build a railway (starting on January 1, 1897) straight across the desert and then south down the Nile toward its confluence with the Atbara River. “Fighting the Dervish was primarily a matter of transport,” Winston Churchill, who accompanied Kitchener’s Sudan campaign as a subaltern in the 21st Lancers, triumphantly wrote, an assertion seemingly borne out by the campaign’s inexorable southward progress.

The railway resolved Kitchener’s logistical problems, cutting a trip of many days down to mere hours. The line also made the penetration of Sudan possible regardless of the season and independent of in-country resources.

Observing these events, Abdullahi concluded an attack on the Dervish capital down at Omdurman was fast approaching, and so forbade his subordinates from advancing further north than el Matamma, 120 miles south along the Nile from Berber. He also ordered his general Oth-

man Diqna to merge his army at Adarama, 70 miles east of el Matamma along the Atbara River, with that of Othman’s superior commander, Mahmud Ahmad.

By November 1897, water levels on the Nile had begun their seasonal drop, restricting the activities of the gunboats that Kitchener had been using to observe and harass Dervish forces along the river. His forces in Berber, still numbering only 2,000, remained in the town without movement, while the railroad had only reached a little ways beyond Abu Hamad 120 miles north along the Nile. Failing to take into account the powers of swift concentration that the railway represented, Abdullahi concluded that this might be a good time to strike, so he gathered together Dervish forces numbering 60,000 for a general advance northward.

This moved Kitchener to initiate a concentration of Egyptian troops towards Berber in late December, and he also telegraphed Cairo to ask for a British brigade. English and Scottish troops were soon on their way to Sudan from Egypt and Malta as reinforcements. While these troops were in motion, Kitchener sent several infantry battalions to begin digging at a position between the Nile and Atbara rivers, which eventually became a major rear area fortification, Fort Atbara.

By January, Kitchener’s troops had concentrated themselves in camps along the Nile between Abu Hamad and Fort Atbara. Despite this looming threat, Abdullahi inexplicably disbanded his massive Dervish army on January 23, 1898, because of squabbling among his generals, and consequently, Mahmud decided to press forward with his much smaller force of 20,000.

At this critical juncture, a number of important decisions not taken gave Kitchener the space to make preparations that would affect the outcome of the coming fight. If Mahmud had advanced from el Matamma as early as mid-January, he could have retaken Berber, and if the larger army near Omdurman had taken the field, this would have become a certainty. At any rate, Mahmud sent his army across the Nile from el Matamma to Shendi on February 25 and moved north on March 18 with orders to attack Berber and destroy the British railhead. Mahmud had originally intended to head straight north towards the enemy, but once Kitchener’s gunboats began shelling Mahmud’s column, Mahmud changed directions, leading his army eastward into the desert toward the Atbara River.

Mahmud now put himself in a bind. He was further away from Berber than ever with inadequate water and food supplies, cut off from the wells seized and stores destroyed by his enemies, and worst of all, plagued by desertions. In response to Kitchener’s movements, Mahmud

dug in along the Atbara River 40 miles southeast of its junction with the Nile in between the towns of an-Nakheila and el Fahada on March 20. In contrast to the barren lands through which the Nile passed, the banks of the Atbara were flanked by dense belts of green scrub and groves of palm trees, while the river bed itself was mostly dry sand dotted with small pools of water (the remains of the stream as it receded with the onset of hot weather). Mahmud's camp had been built within this green riverine belt, enclosed on all sides for three miles by a zariba, a barrier built of mimosa thorns. The interior camp fortifications consisted of dried mud ramparts, log palisades, cross trenches, gun emplacements, squat forts, and clusters of camp huts or shelters (called tukals) made



ABOVE: Map of rail and campaign locations along the Atbara River. Inset locator map shows Egypt and Sudan. **LEFT:** Winston Churchill, junior officer and war correspondent attached to the 21st Lancer Regiment during the battle. **OPPOSITE:** General Kitchener's engineers built a rail line to facilitate the campaign, and surprised Mahmud Ahmad, the Dervish commander with the subsequent speed of the British Army advance.



of palm branches or grass.

Kitchener's army, which was rushing by train, camel, gunboat, and foot to come together, all reached camp at Kunur, five miles north along the Nile from the Atbara River, by March 16, and by March 20, the whole army was at Hudi on the Atbara, and then Ra's el Hudi further downriver the next day. For more than a week, the troops sweltered in 115-degree heat, waiting and hoping for news of imminent battle while the sirdar sent out mounted reconnaissance patrols, which discovered Mahmud's camp on March 30.

After thoroughly spying out Mahmud's defenses and troop strength, Kitchener determined that the enemy was sufficiently weak to merit an attack. The main army left el Hudi April 4 for Abadar to get closer for one last reconnaissance sweep, and then on the morning of April 6th, the army reached Umm Dabiya, its last camp before going into battle. The men spent much of the next day cleaning the sand and dust from their

rifles, loading their rifles with dum-dum bullets, resting, or writing letters home. Churchill observed that "all the camp throbbed with suppressed excitement" about the coming battle. Army commanders also took the time to relay Kitchener's battle orders to the men, which was very revealing of Kitchener's mindset on the eve of battle: "[The sirdar] only wishes to impress upon them two words: remember Gordon. The enemy before them are Gordon's murderers."

All was ready by the next evening, April 7th. The brigades (the British in the lead) formed up into squares and got underway in the red glow of the setting sun. For three hours, the onward march continued. At 9 p.m., the army arrived at Mutrus, where the men sat down to wolf down a meal of bran biscuits and water and a rest. For the next four hours, only the sentries remained awake, as well as the commanding officers, including Kitchener and his staff, who roamed the ranks to inspect the men in the darkness.

Quiet reigned over the camp until just after midnight when one of the Highlanders, who had been kicked by a mule, awoke and suddenly cried out in the darkness. The men jumped up, arms at the ready, “gazing,” Churchill said, “with fierce, eager eyes into the darkness” until learning that it had been a false alarm. Silence resumed.

At 1:15 a.m., now April 8—Good Friday—the men were roused from sleep. The march resumed under moonlight, the men miraculously keeping their formations despite the uneven ground. “There was a heavy muffled sound through the night that did not carry far, as of thousands of feet tramping slowly,” an unnamed *Sunday Times* of Sydney correspondent wrote, “the weird potency of a dimly seen, silent armed force.”

The army halted in front of the Dervish position at 3:45 a.m. Nothing was visible in the darkness but the enemy’s campfires a mile and a half away. The army then deployed into attack formation: on the far left, eight Egyptian cavalry squadrons, the British Brigade (1st Battalions of the Queen’s Own Cameron Highlanders, Royal Warwickshire, Seaforth Highlanders, and Lincolnshire Regiments) commanded by Maj. Gen. William Gatacre; the Egyptian Brigade (9th, 10th, and 11th Sudanese and 2nd Egyptian Battalions) commanded by Col. Hector MacDonald; and the 1st Egyptian Brigade (12th, 13th, 14th Sudanese and 8th and 15th Egyptian Battalions) under Col. John Maxwell. This force of 14,000 men was additionally supported by 24 artillery pieces, 4 Maxim guns, and a Royal Navy 24-pound rocket detachment.

The line advanced to within half a mile of the Dervish zariba, advancing through shallow gullies that twisted and turned in every direction. The sun began to rise, but all was still quiet. In the quickening light, the Dervishes finally spotted the approaching army. “There was a great stir in their encampment,” the *Times* reporter said. “Mounted men and men afoot hurried from point to point, and horsemen began to issue in hundreds from the south corner of the zariba and trot off to our left ... Gradually, most of those who had been standing up and looking at us stepped back and down into their trenches.” Farther in the distance, groups of horsemen had taken their stand on higher places, watching the army’s movements. One Dervish who stood out, wearing a commanding general’s hat and jibbah (a loose-fitting linen shirt decorated with colored patches of cloth and worn over loose-fitting trousers) and holding a spear, stood watching on a raised fortification near the center of the Dervish lines.

Kitchener’s commanders chose two good artillery positions from which to shell enemy defenses, and at 6:20 a.m., all 24 guns came into action supported by fire from the rocket detachment, keeping up a thunderous bombardment for

more than an hour.

Hardly 10 minutes into the bombardment, a massive cloud of dust rose within the zariba, followed by the appearance of 2,000 Dervish horsemen coming around the side of the zariba facing the army’s left wing. Dashing to intercept them, the Egyptian cavalry supported by heavy Maxim fire drove them back into the belt of palm trees, where they remained for some time as a silent threat to the British left flank. The bombardment continued, methodically pounding one section of the camp at a time from front to rear. The gunfire

Alamy



ABOVE: Seaforth Highlanders, led by an officer with sword drawn, attack over a thorn-covered barricade.

An estimated 83 Anglo-Egyptian soldiers were killed, and nearly 500 wounded, while the Dervish lost an estimated 5,000 killed, wounded or captured. **OPPOSITE:** British infantry in tropical field dress, wait for further orders perhaps during a field exercise, as Colonel Villiers Hatton, seated on a donkey center-right, and other officers observe during the campaign.



Royal Collection

Egyptian brigade in the center, and a Sudanese brigade on the right. The Camerons were put at the front of the British brigade, equipped with rawhide gloves, bill hooks, blankets, sacks, and scaling ladders to be used for either ripping apart or surmounting the thorny zariba barrier.

The battle plan called for the columns to advance with the line out in front, suppressing enemy fire as they went. Once reaching the zariba, the front assault line would tear it apart, allowing the columns behind them to follow through the gaps and move rightward through the camp, clearing it with bayonets and gunfire.

“They stood still, waiting on the bugle,” Steevens wrote, “a line of khaki and dark tartan blending to purple, of flashing bayonets at the slope, and set, two-month bearded faces strained toward the zariba.” The expected bugle call for the general advance finally came at 7:40 a.m. A slow march began, accompanied by the music of the Scottish bagpipers, the English fife and drum players, and the Sudanese drummers, as well a tremendous shout which started on the right flank and was echoed by the men on the left.

At 300 yards out the enemy opened fire, but the infantry kept advancing, halting now and then to fire section volleys into the waiting Dervishes. The encampment was enveloped in clouds of gun smoke while spurts of dust kicked up by Dervish rifle bullets erupted from the pebbly sand around the advancing soldiers. About 100 attackers went down, picked up by stretcher bearers and doctors as the line passed, but they reformed their line and continued bearing down on the zariba.

Reaching the barrier, the advance halted. Amid shouts and cheers of “Come on, men!” and “Remember Gordon!,” the Camerons went to

work ripping gaps in the wall of thorns. Their comrades provided covering fire aimed at the palisade and trenches beyond.

Soon, all the attacking columns had burst through. Advancing in successive rushes, they now encountered a stockade and a triple trench system, which they soon took, bayonetting, shooting, and parrying blows from the Dervish soldiers, which began running for cover further in, stopping every so often to turn and fire. In every hut and trench, more hidden Dervishes poured on fire, rushing out from among groups of wounded or jumping out of holes and other hiding places with guns, spears and swords. With the Highlanders still in the lead and English and Sudanese troops pressing in behind them, the southward advance through the camp toward the river continued unabated nonetheless, killing the enemy soldiers in their path. “It was,” Churchill said, “as if a wave had broken on a child’s castle in the sand, toppling over the weak walls, pouring in from every side, and sweeping the whole place clear and level.”

Kitchener’s soldiers wrought horrific carnage as they went, treading over “pits choked with dead and dying, among heaps of mangled camels and donkeys, among decapitated or eviscerated trunks, the ghastly results of the shell fire; women and little children killed by the bombardment or praying in wild terror for mercy, blacks chained in their trenches, slaughtered in their chains. Always onwards [they] marched with bayonets running blood, clothes, hands, and faces all besmeared ... and the savage whistle of random bullets in their ears,” as Churchill remembered.

The fight inside the camp became utterly chaotic, “a horrible nightmare,” but not just for the Dervishes. Occasional lapses of fire discipline

caused some troops to fire wildly in all directions, and the broken ground of the battlefield caused a number of friendly-fire casualties. Also, resistance from Dervish troops on the high ground in the middle of the camp—Mahmud’s command post was held by 1,000 of his chosen followers—almost annihilated the 11th Sudanese as they rushed it, taking 100 casualties. The many small interior forts, in which all defenders were killed, also made for difficult fighting.

Despite the tough Dervish resistance, the men broke through to the zariba on the river bank at about 8:20 a.m. The survivors of Mahmud’s army had escaped the enclosure and were fleeing across the dry river bed into the desert. The attackers opened fire, killing hundreds of fleeing Dervishes. Using the cover of the river bank, a few Dervishes made a brief last stand, but the Tommies broke through the mimosa and palm tree barrier with a shout, overwhelming them.

With that, the battle was over. The entire affair, from the opening artillery salvo to the breakthrough to the river behind the camp, took only two hours. Sporadic shots rang out as any remaining Dervishes hiding along the river bank fled to the desert on the other side. The firing finally ceased and the Sudanese troops ran in among the British—cheering wildly, waving their rifles aloft, and shaking hands with the Tommies, which the Tommies returned in kind. The *Times* correspondent commented, “Brothers in arms, blacks and whites, their fraternal unity has been cemented by mutual goodwill and close companionship in danger.... As Tommy himself has been overheard since to say, “Those bally blacks after all can fight a bit, you bet.”

As the troops moved back through the camp



Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection

toward the open desert, Kitchener and his staff rode up, and were feted with loud cheers from the entire army, with helmets and turbans held aloft on rifles. Even the sirdar, known for his unemotional aloofness, was visibly moved by this tribute. "He was quite human for a quarter of an hour," one officer remarked.

The crushing British victory at the Atbara, marked "a very Good Friday," in Kitchener's words. The Anglo-Egyptian army had lost 81 dead and 478 wounded in the fighting that day. The Dervish losses, though, were catastrophic: more than 3,000 killed within and around the zareba, and perhaps as many as another 5,000 were killed in the act of fleeing the battlefield over the days that followed. About 2,000 prisoners were taken—some of which subsequently defected to Kitchener's army—as well as quantities of banners, war drums, rifles, 10 artillery pieces and all the baggage of the Dervish army. With the exception of Osman Digna (who fled with a large contingent of troops) and three other chiefs, all the important Dervish commanders were killed.

As for Mahmud, a Sudanese platoon found

him sitting on a carpet in his hut after the battle, wearing the Dervish jibba uniform, his weapons at his side, "in the manner of defeated war chiefs who await death," Steevens wrote. They brought him to Kitchener just as he was beginning to write his dispatches after the battle. Steevens was impressed, describing him as "the narrow-cheeked, high-foreheaded type ... his expression was cruel, but high," and he approached Kitchener head defiantly held erect but yet limping slightly, his short baggy drawers stained with blood from a bayonet thrust.

"Are you the man Mahmoud?" Kitchener asked.

"Yes, I am Mahmud, and the same as you [i.e., top commander]," Mahmud replied.

"Why did you come to make war here?"

"I came because I was told, the same as you."

Throughout the rest of the day, the army reformed again outside the zariba and settled down for a rest, lit fires, and had some tea, biscuits and tinned meat. As the sun rose, the blast furnace heat became unbearable in the shadeless desert. The water in their containers was hot and was running

out, while the water from the river was foul and muddy. Some of the Highlanders spread their kilts on the small, scrubby bushes to create shade, but their English, Sudanese, and Egyptian comrades had no such accoutrements to work with, so they just suffered throughout the daytime hours.

While the men were resting, the thinly staffed field hospital contingent were gathering up the wounded, who also suffered from the heat and the unavailability of medical equipment and supplies. Funerals were held for the dead at 3 p.m., consisting of burial in a shallow trench dug into the hard, stony sand on the battlefield accompanied by rifle volleys and a piper playing the tune "Lochaber No More." The march back to the rear area at Umm Dabiya began at 4 p.m., and the troops arrived at 2 a.m. the following morning.

Kitchener returned to Berber, first stopping off at Fort Atbara to attend a thanksgiving service on Easter Sunday. Once in Berber, Kitchener ordered a victory parade of his troops, at the head of which Mahmud was forced to march past the review stand where the sirdar and his staff sat watching, his hands bound behind his back and wearing a

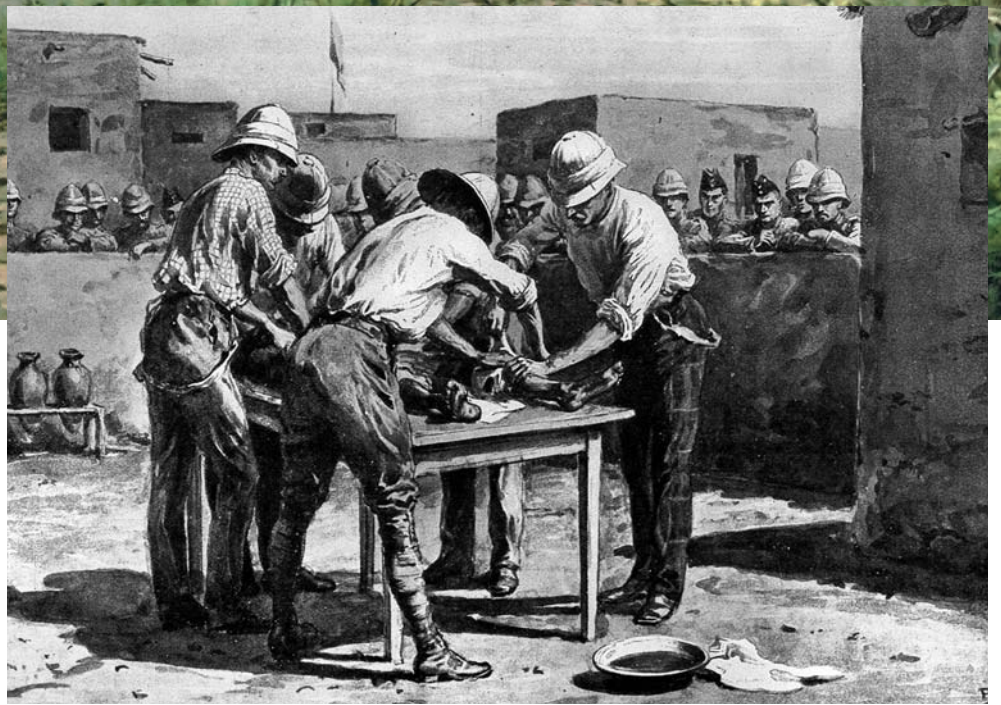


yoke. A flag preceded Mahmud bearing the Arabic inscription, "This is Mahmud, who said he would take Berber."

The last Dervish force between the Anglo-Egyptian force and the Dervish capital at Omdurman was now destroyed. The way lay open. The Anglo-Egyptian army spent the summer in camp, but gathering again for one last final push, they wreaked a terrible slaughter on the only remaining Dervish army at Karari, seven miles north of Omdurman on September 2, killing 10,000 soldiers, an awful ending to 17 years of war.

Now the undisputed masters of Sudan, the British Army wreaked its vengeance on the Mahdi by destroying his tomb in Omdurman and throwing his bones into the Nile, saving the Mahdi's skull to present to Kitchener as a grisly trophy. Kitchener, not knowing what to do with it, stored it in a Cairo warehouse until it was ultimately buried back in Sudan.

The French threat to the Southern Nile was also extinguished when a French military camp at Fashoda over 500 miles south of Omdurman peacefully disbanded itself in November 1898.



ABOVE: British doctors operate on a Dervish prisoner of war in front of a crowd of onlookers at a camp in Darmali, Sudan, after the Battle of Atbara. OPPOSITE: Mahdi commander Mahmud Ahmad, surrounded by Sudanese soldiers of the Egyptian Brigade, is presented to General Herbert Kitchener after the battle. Mahmud is wearing the traditional Dervish uniform, stained with blood from a bayonet wound. An estimated 4,000 dervishes were captured.

Abdullahi fled south after the defeat at Omdurman, and on November 25, 1899, the British captured and killed him. His top generals were imprisoned at Rosetta in the Nile Delta, and many of them, including Mahmud, died there.

And that was the end of the Mahdist war, but

not of Sudan's troubles. British rule ended in 1956, but this tortured nation has continued suffering under dictatorships, a dismemberment in 2011 into a southern black African state and a northern Arab state, and an ongoing bloody civil war in the north since 2023. ■



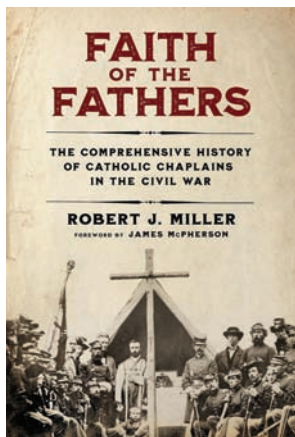
Collection of the Raclin Murphy Museum of Art, University of Notre Dame

Priests served all denominations as official and unofficial chaplains in the Union and Confederate armies during the Civil War.

By Kevin Seabrooke

Those who served the Protestant spiritual needs of the fighting men of the Civil War, in both official and unofficial capacities, faced numerous barriers, shortages and hardships—though they did receive a captain’s salary and horse, they were not identified as such by the government, nor were they provided with uniforms, rations or forage for the horse. Conditions were most often much more difficult for their Catholic counterparts. The Catholic population had grown, but America was still largely a Protestant country. Attitudes such as those held by President John Adams—who wrote in a letter to

Thomas Jefferson that “If ever there was a body of men who merited eternal damnation on earth and in hell, it is this Society of [Ignatius de] Loyola”—were still prevalent during the Civil War.



Ironically, there would be 21 American Jesuits involved in the war as official or unofficial chaplains, more than any other Catholic order. Eleven were formal chaplains, four for the Confederacy and seven for the Union. The other 10 served as occasional chaplains.

The stories of what these men saw and did during the war, as it was for most who fought in it, stretch to the limits of pathos.

Father John Ireland was 24 and had only been a priest for a year when he was given permission to join the Fifth Minnesota Volunteer Infantry in 1862.

“On one occasion, an officer was dying—shot in the face—blood pouring out. He wrote on a slip of paper: ‘Chaplain,’ and the slip, red with blood, was carried around by a soldier, seeking

***Absolution Under Fire* by Paul Henry Wood captures the moment at the Battle of Gettysburg on July 2, 1863, when Rev. William J. Corby, then chaplain of the 88th New York Regiment (of the legendary Irish Brigade) stood on a boulder to bless the troops as they went into battle. Corby spoke of their noble cause and sacred duty, exhorting them to make a sincere act of contrition before receiving absolution from him.**

Urgent Warning For Anyone With an IRA or 401(k)...

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One Incorrect Move Could Trigger a 50% Tax on Your Retirement Accounts.

Get the Simple Action Plan That Will IRS-Proof Your Money.

On December 20, 2019, Congress passed THE SECURE ACT. And buried deep inside the bill is an obscure clause that punishes responsible savers and investors.

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Inside this bill is the most sweeping retirement legislation in more than a decade.

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- **WARNING: What never to do with your IRA.** This honest mistake among family members can make every dime taxable and become the kiss of death for your retirement account. See how you can avoid it.
- **The sneaky IRS move that could cost you dearly.** Did you know that proposed IRS rules — years away from becoming official — could impact your taxes THIS YEAR? It’s true. But you can navigate this gray area easily and avoid big surprises.
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for a chaplain. It was handed to me,” Ireland wrote later. “I hurried: the man was conscious—dying fast. ‘Speak to me,’ he said, ‘of Jesus.’ He had been baptized—there was no time to talk of the Church. I talked of the Savior, and sorrow for sin. The memory of that scene has never been effaced from my mind. I have not doubted the salvation of that soul.”

Accounts of the priest’s work at the well-documented horror that was Georgia’s Andersonville Prison is especially moving, with none more poignant than that of Father Peter Whelan, a native of County Wexford, Ireland, who, at 62, was the oldest of all the Catholic chaplains who served.

He arrived at Andersonville in June of 1864 there were 25,000 men in the 26-acre stockade meant to hold 10,000. Near the end of his time at the prison, he secured funds to buy 10,000 pounds of wheat flour to be baked into what became known as “Whelan’s Bread” and fed to the prisoners for several months.

Though he was only at the prison for four months, he made a lasting impression. One prisoner later described Whelan’s work, “kneeling down by the side of decaying bodies, in the stench and filth of gangrene wards ... many a time I have seen him thus praying.... His services were sought by all, for in his kind and sympathizing looks, his meek but earnest appearance, the despairing prisoners read that all humanity had not forsaken mankind.”

But not all of the accounts are as grim. As with all chaplains during the war, the Catholic priests would also struggle for recognition and acceptance, which they ultimately earned through their own courage and dedication.

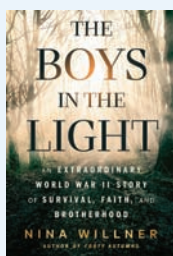
Chaplains were usually chosen by a vote of regimental officers. In September of 1861, the 73rd New York Fire Zouaves, made up of tough firemen from New York City, elected Father Joseph O’Hagan as one of the first, and youngest, Jesuit chaplains.

“Most of them were the scum of New York society, reeking with vice and spreading a moral malaria around them,” O’Hagan wrote after his first encounter with the 73rd. “About half the regiment (perhaps two thirds) called themselves Catholics, but all the Catholicity they had was the faith infused into their souls by baptism.”

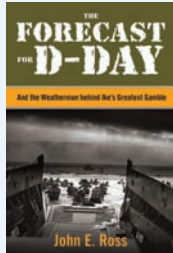
In September of 1862, President Lincoln personally asked O’Hagan to become a hospital chaplain, but he stayed with the 73rd, where he was, by all accounts, liked by the men and very involved.

Of his election, O’Hagan would recall that, “Over 400 voted for a Catholic priest, 154 for any kind of a Protestant minister; 11 for a Mormon; and 335 said they could find their way to hell without the assistance of clergy.”

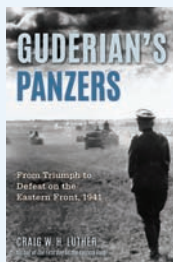
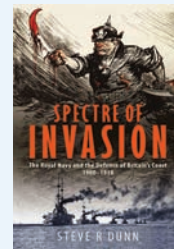
SHORT BURSTS



The Boys in the Light: An Extraordinary World War II Story of Survival, Faith, and Brotherhood (Nina Willner, Dutton, New York, NY, 2025, 384 pp., \$25 HC). The incredible story of two boys—one the author’s father—who escaped Auschwitz and Buchenwald.



Spectre of Invasion: The Royal Navy and the Defence of Britain’s Coast, 1900–1918 (Steve Dunn, Seaforth Publishing/Casemate, Havertown, PA, 2025, 352 pp., \$44.95 HC) Comprehensive exploration of Britain’s lack of a standing army and fears of a German invasion during the Great War era.



The Forecast for D-Day: And the Weatherman behind Ike’s Greatest Gamble (John E. Ross, Lyons Press, Essex, CT, 2025, 272 pp., \$22.95 SC) RAF meteorologist Captain James Martin Stagg persuaded Ike to delay history’s largest maritime operation by a day.

A Light in the Northern Sea (Tim Brady, Kensington, New York, NY, 2025, 272 pp., 8-page photo insert, \$29 HC) The true story of how the Danes rescued nearly all of their Jewish citizens during WWII by ferrying them in small groups to neutral Sweden.

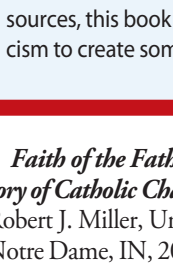


Guderian’s Panzers: From Triumph to Defeat on the Eastern Front, 1941 (Craig W.H. Luther, Stackpole Books, Mechanicsburg, PA, September 2025, 430 pp., maps, photos, index, \$39.95 HC) Detailed reconstruction of Op Barbarossa from the point of view of Gen. Heinz Guderian and his 2nd Panzer Group.



Mercenaries, Gunslingers, and Outlaws: Two Years as a Security Contractor in Iraq (Robert M. Kurtz, Casemate Books, Havertown, PA, 2025, 216 pp., \$34.95 HC) A look at what it was really like in Iraq in the early years after the U.S. invasion, by a security contractor who spent 2.5 years there.

Sons of the Arghandab: Top Guns in the Devil’s Playground (Joseph J. Fontenot, Casemate Books, Havertown, PA, 2025, 272 pp., \$34.95 HC) The story of the 1-320th Field Artillery “Top Guns” Battalion who survived a year in Afghanistan’s Arghandab River Valley (2010-2011) told by a veteran who was there.



Matisse at War: Art and Resistance in Nazi Occupied France (Christopher C. Gorham, Citadel Press, New York, NY, September 2025, 452 pp., \$29 HC) Through intimate letters and many other sources, this book reveals Matisse’s journey of reinvention in the face of war and fascism to create some of his greatest art. ■



Faith of the Fathers: The Comprehensive History of Catholic Chaplains in the Civil War (Rev. Robert J. Miller, University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, IN, 2025, 480 pp., 26 b&cw illustrations and 2 tables, notes, bibliography, index, \$45 HC) is an indispensable resource for those who also want the numbers—broken down by denomination, Union and Confederate, with ratios of chaplains to soldiers—and the history of early religious representation in the American military.

Lincoln’s Lady Spymaster (Gerri Willis, Harper/



HarperCollins, New York, NY, 2025, 288 pp., \$28.99, HC)

Elizabeth Van Lew was born in Richmond, Virginia, in 1818, to parents from Philadelphia and Long Island. Raised in a mansion in the city, she finished her education in Philadelphia. Her family had gone to great lengths to adapt to their south-

ern home, even going so far as to own 21 enslaved people before the Civil War. She and her mother, Eliza, opposed slavery (her father had died in 1843) and supported African colonization, a proposal to deport blacks to Liberia in Africa. Van Lew freed some of her family's slaves, but still owned some well into the war. Early in the war, as a wealthy woman, she was able to visit Union prisoners without much suspicion. These men passed on information overheard from the guards, and she even helped some of them escape. When she was barred from visiting the prisons, she managed to assemble a clandestine network of Unionists, abolitionists, slaves and others to be her eyes and ears in the heart of the Confederate Capital. She was able to get information to Washington, D.C., and General Ulysses Grant with couriers and coded ciphers. Willis brings into the light for a broader audience the courage of a dedicated group of people led by an extraordinarily principled woman whose actions are often overlooked.

Women of War: The Italian Assassins, Spies, and Couriers Who Fought the Nazis (Suzanne Cope, Dutton, New York, NY, 2025, 480 pp., maps, photographs, notes, index, \$32 HC)



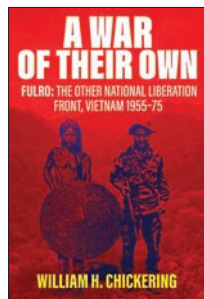
The author brings to life the efforts of four women in different parts of Italy, who each in their own way found it within themselves to resist both Italian fascists and Nazi invaders.

In Florence, Teresa Mattei—who would later help write Italy's new constitution—wrote articles for underground newspapers, led political education meetings and smuggled vital intelligence between resistance leader Bruno Sanguinetti and other partisan leaders during the German occupation. It was during this time that Mattei was raped and tortured, but managed to escape with the help of a sympathetic soldier. In Rome, Carla Capponi made bombs and delivered them to the targets herself. Anita Malavasi lived in camps in the Apennine Mountains where she led hundreds of partisan fighters through the dangerous terrain. In the Alps, Bianca Guidetti Serra was a courier who delivered information to anti-Fascist forces hidden in the mountains, as well as printing and distributing anti-Fascist posters and materials.

Some 70,000 women participated in Women's Defense and Assistance groups during the Italian Resistance of 1943-45. But they were not just battling fascists, they were planning for the future of women in Italy. This detailed look at four of the women who helped rebuild their country is a

fascinating read and long overdue.

A War of Their Own: FULRO: The Other National Liberation Front, Vietnam 1955-75 (William H. Chickering, Casemate Books,



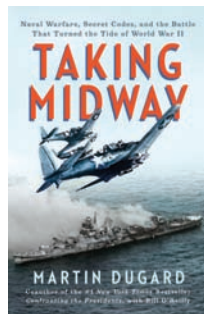
Havertown, PA, 2025, 256 pp., 26 photos & 3 maps, \$34.95 HC)

Details the efforts of the resistance movement of the United Front for the Liberation of Oppressed Races (FULRO), whose objective was autonomy for various indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities in South Vietnam, including the Montagnards in the Central Highlands, the Chams in Central Vietnam, and the Khmer Krom in Southern Vietnam. With some support from Cambodia and the People's Republic of China FULRO often conducted guerrilla warfare against both South and North Vietnam.

Author William Chickering commanded a Mobile Strike Force Command (MIKE)—a key Army Special Forces component in the Vietnam War—battalion of Montagnards in Vietnam in 1967. The Montagnards were highland tribesmen who were part of the secret army of FULRO, whose goal was to drive all Vietnamese, whether communist or not, who they saw as colonialists, from what they considered their land.

Chickering has spent decades investigating the history and fate of FULRO and its leaders, even moving to Vietnam in the 1980s in his search for the truth.

Taking Midway: Naval Warfare, Secret Codes, and the Battle that Turned the Tide of World War II (Martin Dugard, Dutton, New York, NY, 2025, 368 pp., \$32 HC)



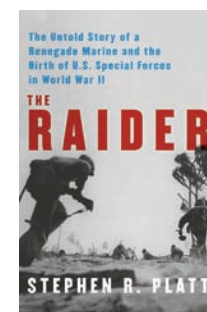
In a basement in Honolulu, Hawaii, a team of unconventional military cryptographers known as Station Hypo are led by Lt.-Com. Joseph Rochefort's, who is sure he is close to breaking Japan's top secret JN-25b code in April 1942.

Rochefort tells his skeptical superiors that Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto is planning to send four aircraft carriers for an attack on Midway Island that would be larger than Pearl Harbor. Military intelligence is convinced that Australis is the next target, not a refueling station in the middle of nowhere.

Eventually, a test is devised after Rochefort

believes he has the Japanese code for Midway ("AF") and the Navy transmits a false message from Midway about a shortage of fresh water. Soon after, a Japanese message about a water shortage at "AF" is intercepted. The Battle of Midway in June 1942 was a significant turning point in the Pacific theater of World War II, and the Navy's ability to break Japanese codes was a crucial part of the victory. Dugard is a New York Times bestselling author of several history books and coauthor with Bill O'Reilly of the Killing series.

The Raider: The Untold Story of a Renegade Marine and the Birth of U.S. Special Forces in World War II (Stephen R. Platt, Knopf, New

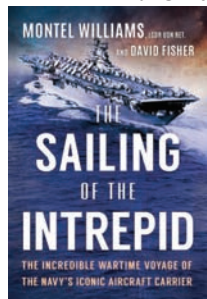


York, NY, 2025, 544 pp., \$35 HC)

Evans Fordyce Carlson was a complex man with a heavily decorated and varied military career who is credited by many for developing the tactics and culture of what would become the special forces operations. He was also a secret confidant of Franklin Roosevelt and one of the most controversial officers ever to serve in the Marine Corps. He came out of retirement from the Marines to lead "Carlson's Raiders" during World War II and earned a second Navy Cross in the Makin Raid on August 17, 1942. He would earn a third for extraordinary heroism and distinguished leadership in November and December 1942 for his actions at Guadalcanal. Even after he took on an advisory role, he landed with the Marines at Tarawa in November 1943. He earned a second Purple Heart during the Battle of Saipan in 1944.

Along with his years of research, Platt had access to newly discovered diaries and correspondence in English and Chinese that offer insight into Carlson's idealism regarding Chinese Communists—something that proved ruinous in the McCarthy era.

The Sailing of the Intrepid: The Incredible Wartime Voyage of the Navy's Iconic Aircraft



Carrier (Montel Williams (with David Fisher), Hanover Square Press/HarperCollins, New York, NY, 2025, 304 pp., maps, diagrams, \$30 HC)

Nearly 40 years before she was towed to New York City's Pier 86 to become a permanent part

DEVISE STRATEGIES ACROSS NEARLY FIVE HUNDRED YEARS OF HISTORY IN THE LATEST EUROPA UNIVERSALIS GAME

By Joseph Luster

EUROPA UNIVERSALIS V

Genre: Strategy • **Platform:** PC • **Publisher:** Paradox Interactive

Available: Summer 2025

If grand strategy is your bread and butter, your plate is going to be especially loaded with the impending return of the *Europa Universalis* series. Publisher Paradox Interactive and developer Paradox Tinto announced *Europa Universalis V* in May, and while there's no release date in place as of this writing, it already appears there's a ton to look forward to from the new entry.

Like the games before it, ambition is at the heart of *Europa Universalis V*. The strategy outing spans nearly five hundred years of history, letting players choose from hundreds of nations spanning the Middle Ages up to the Age of Revolution. Whether you want to take charge of the Yuan Dynasty, feudal Japan, Italy or other historical civilizations, their fate is in your hands, for better or worse.

Major historical events fall into place as you rule throughout the timeline, but that doesn't mean everything is going to play out as it was written. Alternate histories are very real possibilities here, so why not see if you can outdo the leaders of the past and forge your own unique path through a brand-new history?

A lot of this will sound familiar to longtime fans of the *Europa Universalis* series. There are plenty of updates in store, according to Paradox, including more detailed diplomacy and a "more sophisticated economic model." Fans



can look forward to revisions to the military system and an overall leap in logistical depth, as well. The fifth entry also promises the most detailed trade system to date, with dozens of goods and crops up for production and trade across an abundant map.

For many, the mere fact that *Europa Universalis V* is on the way is enough incentive to keep up with its ongoing development. Paradox have proven themselves repeatedly in the past, so all we can do now is bide our time with previous outings while waiting for the next to dominate our free time in the (hopefully) not-so-distant futurer.

METAL THUNDER

Genre: Aerial combat • **Platform:** PC • **Publisher:** Dumbbell Games

Available: Now

Developer and publisher Dumbbell Games released the aerial combat game *Metal Thunder* in Early Access on Steam back in November 2024. The game promises a blend of the bird's-eye thrills of *Call of Duty's* AC-130 missions with roguelike progression—including the ability to regularly unlock more powerful weapons, upgrades and perks—and its roadmap shows what could be a bright future for the indie effort.

Much of the roadmap contains benchmarks for post-1.0, which includes features that will launch after the full version of the game is available. Chief among them is Campaign Mode, which aims to start a week after launch with a cadence of one new campaign mission every month. With



these come new campaign-based modes, including time trials, stealth ops and more. The goal is to match the debut of each new mode with the latest mission's theme, so the order in which these are added remains to be seen.

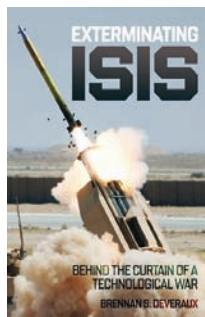
At the time of this writing, seven new weapons have been added post-Early Access launch. The devs also added four new maps in that time, as well as updates like ground troop control that tosses minor real-time strategy elements into the mix. Like any modern military outing with high ambitions, the folks at Dumbbell also have a zombie-themed campaign

mode in mind. That one's on the backburner—complete with a new progression tree, more weapons and themed survival maps—for sometime after the 1.0 launch.

The beauty of Early Access is the ability to chime in with your own feedback, which could help shape the future of the full game. It's also slightly nebulous as far as 1.0 dates are concerned, so the full version could very well be here by the time this issue is in your hands! There's some solid promise waiting in the wings here, especially if Dumbbell sticks to the roadmap. ■

of the *Intrepid* Sea, Air & Space Museum in June 1982, the aircraft carrier USS *Intrepid* (CV-11) was launched from the shipyard in Newport News, Virginia. After training in the Caribbean, she set off for the war in the Pacific, to take part in the conquest of the Marshall Islands. Her next assignment was the Japanese fleet anchorage at Truk Atoll in Micronesia, but she never made it. On the night of February 17, an aerial torpedo from a Japanese torpedo bomber struck the ship's stern below the waterline, flooding several compartments, damaging the rudder, and killing 11 sailors, wounding 17 others. With the rudder jammed hard to port, the crew of the *Intrepid* jury rigged a sail made of spare canvas and hatch covers to help steer the ship, sailing more than 3,000 miles back to Pearl Harbor. After temporary repairs, she sailed to California for more work and was back in service by June, eventually supporting operations at Palau and Peleliu. Written by Emmy-winning TV personality Montel Williams, who served 22 years in the Navy and Marines, and *New York Times* bestselling author David Fisher, the history of this iconic and beloved part of the New York cityscape comes alive.

Exterminating ISIS: Behind the Curtain of a Technological War (Brennan S. Deveraux, Casemate Books, Havertown, PA, 2025, 208 pp., \$34.95 HC)



“In 2016, I was responsible for the deaths of over 600 people. But they deserved to die—all of them. They were the bad guys, the evil of our time. History will not grant the Islamic State a redemption arc.... I don't lose sleep over what we did. However, I still struggle with how easy it was. Technology turned warfare into a game, and we treated it as such.”

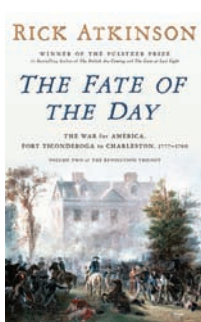
Major Brennan Deveraux is now a national security researcher at the U.S. Army War College's Strategic Studies Institute. But from January to August in 2016, he was deployed to Iraq in a Strike Cell as a theater-level rocket artillery liaison during Operation Inherent Resolve. Brennan's experience gives him insight into war in the 21st century that is increasingly remote and technological. The strategies and tactics of this modern warfare fill the headlines of today from the war in Ukraine and U.S. strikes on Houthis Rebels in Yemen. Deployed to combat twice in Iraq and once to the Horn of Africa,

Deveraux reflects on his personal feelings about his artillery missions that slaughtered a techno-

logically inferior foe, “exposing the impact of ‘remote’ warfare on modern service members. Discussing the darker aspects of “push-button” warfare that he faced—racking up statistics, losing empathy, losing his humanity—and dealing with the mental and emotional repercussions when he returned from overseas.

Deveraux is an active-duty Army major with more than 15 years of service, working as a strategist specializing in strike warfare, emerging technology management, and military innovation.

The Fate of the Day: The War for America, Fort Ticonderoga to Charleston, 1777-1780 (Rick Atkinson, Crown Publishing, New York, NY,



2025, 880 pp., extensive maps & illustrations, notes, index, bibliography \$42 HC)

Pulitzer prize-winning historian Rick Atkinson's second volume of his Revolution Trilogy, covering the middle years of the Revolution. His first volume, *The British Are Coming: The War for America, Lexington to Princeton, 1775-1777* (2019) received rave reviews. *The New York Times* lauded Atkinson's “vast, brilliantly illuminated world contained within its nearly 800 pages.” Beginning with the American debacle at the second encounter with the British at Fort Ticonderoga in 1777 where a woefully outnumbered Maj. Gen. Arthur St. Clair faced the Hobson's choice of saving his reputation or saving his army. He chose the latter and fled south. St. Clair was later court-martial for that decision, but was acquitted and supported by General Washington, though the incident kept him from ever commanding a strategic location.

The touches of humanity extracted from journals, letters and historical records are extraordinary. Atkinson describes British Gen. John Burgoyne as “exuded the high-spirited complacency obligatory at the beginning of every military calamity,” though he did concede that “extraordinary physical difficulties” lay before his expedition. There's also artillery commander Maj. Gen. William Phillips, who placed guns on top of the “inaccessible” 840-foot Mount Defiance (known then as Sugar Loaf), thus forcing St. Clair's flight, who famously said, “where a goat can go, a man can go, and where a man can go, he can drag a gun.” Atkinson's richness of detail and the cinematic scope of his prose in this truly epic retelling of the saga that led to the creation of these United States makes *The Fate of the Day* and the previous volume a must-read for every American, not just the dedicated history buff. ■

WEAPONS

Continued from page 13

feet of the enemy with jammed rifles.”

Another letter to home said, “You know what killed most of us? Our own rifles, the M-16. Practically every one of our dead in a recent battle was found with his rifle torn down next to him where he'd been trying to fix it.”

The Army mulishly responded by stating the Soldiers were not cleaning the rifles properly.

It did not take long for such failures to infect the rest of the Army soldiers and Marines fighting in Vietnam and the M-16's reputation plunged. More letters decrying the weapon's unreliability reached the attention of the U.S. Legislature. Democratic Congressman Richard Ichord of Missouri, in his role as a member of the House Armed Services Committee launched an investigation into the matter. Among the witnesses were members of the insular OC who testified that the change to ball powder was justified. Stoner believed that the OC was trying to discredit the weapon that had so thoroughly outperformed the M-14. Ichord's final 1967 report blamed the main problem on the Army's insistence on using the Olin ball powder. Ichord stated that the continued use of the ball powder bordered on “Criminal negligence.” but this was only one of the reasons for the rifle's disastrous performance. But in truth, it was the decision to not chrome-plate the chamber, and this was due to MacNamara's original evaluation. Since the first AR-15 did not have a chromed chamber he said the production M-16A1 did not need them. It was a cost-saving measure. But MacNamara, being more of a numbers man, did not understand that the original DuPont stick powder didn't foul the chamber and barrel, but the ball powder did.

MacNamara told the OC to make a military version of the AR-15. Instead, the OC altered the rifle to guarantee failure and make their M-14 the weapon of choice, regardless of the consequences.

The Ichord Committee did make the Army see something had to be done. Cleaning kits were issued and the next version of the M-16 had chromed bores. Soldiers were encouraged to clean their rifles as often as possible. Within a year the jams and failures virtually ceased. This was further proof that Stoner had been right all along.

The number of American soldiers killed by enemy fire as a direct result of the failure of their M-16s will never be known, since the Army did not keep records of such casualties and had no desire to do so. But there is no doubt they did happen in shocking numbers. It is a sad commentary to how a hidebound organization in the form of the OC could subvert logic and reason merely because they refused to admit they were wrong. ■

after the verdict. Hans' final words of defiance before his execution were, "*Es lebe die Freiheit!*" (Long live freedom!).

Gisela Schertling, who was in a relationship with Hans, turned herself into the Gestapo two days later, incriminating herself and others. In July, she would recant some of her testimony, saving the lives of four members of the group. She herself would be sentenced to a year in prison.

A second trial of 14 White Rose members for high treason was held on April 19, 1943. Schmorell, Graf, and Huber were sentenced to death and 10 others received prison sentences. Falk Harnack, who knew and communicated with some of the members of the White Rose, was acquitted. Harnack's brother, Arvid, was one of seven members of the Berlin-based resistance group Red Orchestra who were executed on December 19, 1942. They were hung with piano wire from meathooks to prolong death. Arvid's wife, Mildred Fish Harnack was executed by guillotine on February 16, 1943.

Bookstore owner Josef Söhnngen was sentenced to six months in prison on July 13, 1943, for possession of two of the White Rose leaflets.

After the execution of Probst and the Scholls, Munich student Hans Leipelt typed several copies of the sixth White Rose leaflet adding the title "... and yet their spirit lives on!" before passing it on to his sister and other dissidents in Hamburg in April 1943. Late that summer, while Leipelt and his girlfriend, Marie-Luise Jahn, were collecting money for Huber's family—who were destitute after his arrest—when they were denounced and then arrested.

At trial in the People's Court in Donauwörth on October 12, 1944, Leipelt and Jahn were sentenced to death for "preparation of high treason" until Leipelt convinced Jahn's lawyer to incriminate him alone. Jahn's sentence was changed to 12 years in prison. Leipelt was decapitated on January 29, 1945. More trials would be held in Munich, Saarbrücken, and Hamburg.

Eventually, some 60 White Rose associates would be tried in court, with some of them receiving long prison sentences.

In July 1943, the White Rose would reach their largest audience when Royal Air Force bombers dropped more than five million leaflets—titled "A German Leaflet [...] The Manifesto of the Students of Munich"—over German cities including Cologne, Frankfurt, Hamburg and the cities of the Ruhr region. The sixth White Rose leaflet had been passed on by Helmuth James Graf von Moltke to the Norwegian bishop Eivind Berggrav before finally making its way to Britain. ■

French was the loss of the heavy siege train guns intended for the attack on Jamaica. Admiral Hood reported that all the prizes carried "shells and other ordnance stores, amongst which are forged complete for red-hot balls at a siege". Also captured were 26 chests of coin, valued at £25,000, intended for supporting the cost of the invasion of Jamaica.

The ships that dropped out of de Grasse's fleet before the great battle of April 12, the *Caton* and the *Jason*, sailed from Guadeloupe. Off Puerto Rico on April 19, Hood ran them down and captured them both along with a frigate and a sloop. Added to the captures of April 12, Hood's action brought the total of prize money for Rodney's fleet to a reported £420,000 (roughly \$72 million today).

De Grasse's battered fleet was now commanded by Vaudreuil. He reached Cap-Français with 15 ships of the line, where another four were waiting for them. Six more of his ships escaped to Curacao. Vaudreuil found his convoy safe in Cap-Français, where the Franco-Spanish army assembled for the invasion of Jamaica, with 15 Spanish ships of the line. Nonetheless, the allies dropped their plans for the joint attack on Jamaica. It would be almost a year and a half before the Treaty of Paris officially ended the war in 1783, but the Battle of the Saintes (or to use the French name, la Bataille de la Dominique) was the final great fleet action of the American Revolution.

Some officers, including Hood, scoffed at Admiral Rodney's caution. Breaking the line allowed him to trap and overwhelm part of the enemy fleet, but allowed the rest to escape. Had the commander given the order for a general chase, thought Hood, "we should have had twenty sail of the enemy's ships before dark". Speaking with Rodney, Hood "lamented to Sir George on the 13th that ... he did not continue to pursue so as to keep sight of the enemy all night, to which he only answered, 'Come, we have done very handsomely as it is.'"

Rodney's caution didn't bother the British public. After all, the admiral had avenged their navy's defeat by de Grasse at the Battle of the Virginia Capes. And, the glowing victory eased the sting of the loss of the Atlantic colonies at Yorktown. Furthermore, Rodney cemented Britain's hold on her Caribbean possessions.

The Battle of the Saintes left a more important legacy for British naval power. Later British commanders looked back on the battle as proof that "breaking the line" could win decisive naval victories. Among them was Horatio Nelson, who in 1805 would lead the Royal Navy to its crowning victory at Trafalgar. ■

offensive kicked off at 7 a.m., but it took eight hours to wholly secure the approaches to Hill 228. By this time the assault on the main objective had already commenced. The southern slopes of the elevation were too steep for the attackers, so the whole force charged up the northern slope at noon under air and artillery cover. About 400 Chinese occupied the promontory's summit. They were especially well supplied with hand grenades, but by using enveloping moves the attackers outflanked and neutralized the defenders' positions individually. Also, the Chinese seemed to have developed a great fear of hand-to-hand fighting with the much bigger Americans, and would abandon their foxholes at the sight of a bayonet charge. The difficulty advancing up the muddy hillside, coupled with a shortage of small arms ammunition, forced the U.S. to halt their attack just after 6 p.m. A cargo aircraft did manage a pinpoint paratroop of ammunition, but with darkness gathering the besiegers elected to stay put until morning.

The RCT resumed its drive up the slope of Hill 228 at 7 a.m. on March 27, under fire from artillery sited on the Uijeongbu road about 6,000 yards to the north. Return fire from the 187th knocked out this gun at 4 p.m. By this time additional elements of the RCT had overrun Hill 148 just to the east. March 28 was spent clearing additional nearby high ground of hostile forces, neutralizing the last pockets of resistance by about 6:15 p.m. On this day alone the 187th killed 237 Chinese and captured 20. A Belgian battalion arrived on the afternoon of the 29th to reinforce the RCT, which had achieved its objective of cutting the Uijeongbu road and the main hostile force's route of retreat, thus successfully concluding Operation Tomahawk. It was the last combat parachute operation of the Korean War. During its course an estimated 4,208 enemy troops were killed or wounded.

Tomahawk ensured the overall success of Operation Courageous, stopping a massive offensive detected by Ridgway's intelligence operatives before it could kick off. Thanks to the 187th Regimental Combat Team's resolute success in carrying out Tomahawk it made possible subsequent Operation Rigged, which destroyed additional forces and supplies, positioned UN troops on defensible terrain and set up Ridgway for further depredations on the key logistics area in what was called the Iron Triangle, bordered by the towns of Ch'orwon, P'yonggang and Kumhwa. Without Operation Tomahawk and the 187th Regimental Combat Team 1951 might well have been a banner year for the Eastern Bloc. ■

D-DAY

Through A Soldier's Eyes... *Limited Edition Print*

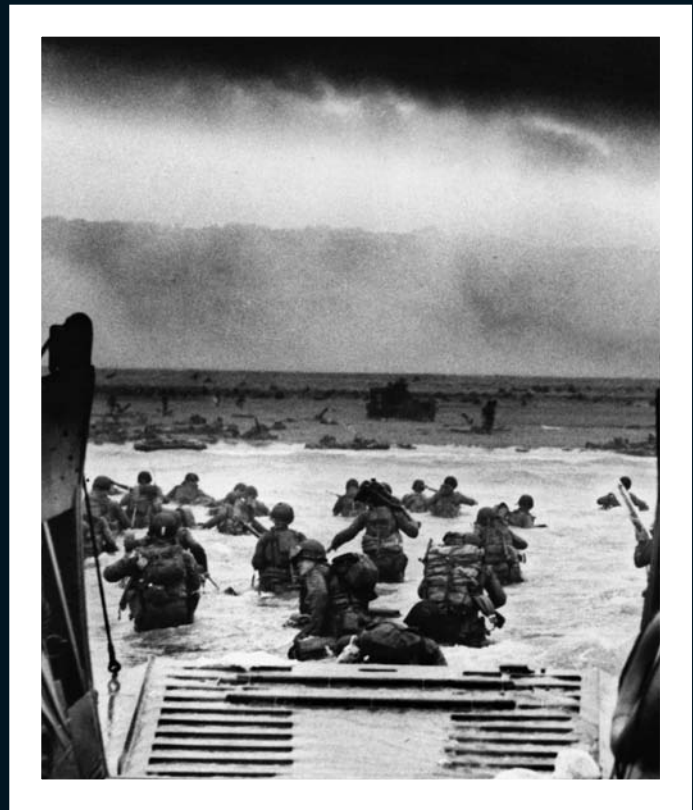
The storm was violent, the waves were huge and the noise was deafening for the soldiers in the landing craft on D-Day, June 6, 1944. As they neared the beach, the door dropped open ... and this photo lets you see exactly what they saw, and feel what they felt: treacherous breakers, withering machine gun fire, a long beach, huge cliffs, and near-certain death.

None hesitated. These brave unselfish men jumped into the cold Atlantic waters. Two thirds of them died soon after, so that we could live in freedom.



This historic photograph shows American soldiers from Company E, 16th Infantry, 1st Infantry Division exiting their LCV landing craft under heavy German machine gun fire on Omaha Beach. The photo was taken by Coast Guard Chief Photographer's Mate Robert F. Sergeant.

Company E landed on Easy Red Beach at 0645 in the face of murderous fire. Those few who survived kept wading right into everything the enemy had and took their objective, which provided the only exit from the beach that the entire Fifth Corps had for two days. Company "E," perhaps by strength of will and courage alone, helped keep the entire landing force from being thrown back into the sea. For a month afterwards, those who survived remained almost in a daze.



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THERMOPYLAE

Continued from page 49

were trained in mountain country and were driven by their desire to get even with the troublesome Greeks.

Dawn found the Immortals cresting a plateau along which the trail snaked eastward. Somewhere ahead lay the Phocians who were supposed to be guarding the trail. Instead, the whole lot of them were asleep and without their armor. Despite the fighting in the pass below, they had not bothered to post guards. A few of them were suddenly given a rude awakening by the rustling of leaves. Sleepy-eyed Phocians stared in disbelief at the long line of Persians swishing through oak leaves that carpeted the trail.

Initially startled at the sight of the shouting and panicked Phocians, Hydarnes quickly recovered and called up his archers who drew back bowstrings and let arrows rip. The Phocians did not even put up a semblance of a fight but high-tailed it farther up the mountainside, presumptuously considering that they were the main objective of the attack. The contemptuous Immortals marched past them. The victory boosted their morale while the presence of the Phocians confirmed that they were on the right trail.

Back at Thermopylae, the seer Megistias examined the innards of his sacrificial animal. To Megistias they foreshadowed death at dawn. It was still dark when deserters drifted in, telling the Greeks that the Persians were on the Anopaea. Before dawn scouts confirmed the ominous prophecy and the deserters' rumors.

The Greeks at once held a heated council of war. The Spartans, Thebans, and Thespians decided to remain in the pass while the other Greeks pulled back eastward and eventually returned to their homelands. The 300 Spartans and 900 helots would hold Thermopylae against the entire Persian army while the 1,100 remaining Thebans and Thespians would guard the Spartans' rear against Hydarnes' approaching Immortals.

The reasoning behind the results of the defender's last war council has been a matter of much speculation. For Leonidas and the Spartans, their code of honor dictated that they should fulfill their duty till the end. Outflanked, their death was ascertained. The strategic objective of holding the pass and forcing the Persians into a decisive sea battle in the adjacent Malian Gulf was lost. All that Leonidas could do now was to delay the Persians long enough for his less courageous Greek allies to make good their escape. If he failed, the fleetier Persian cavalry would catch up with and cut down the fleeing Greeks in the open. Leonidas may have even ordered the other Greeks to retreat.

Another possibility, suggested by the historians Bury and Meiggs, is that the retreating Greeks initially planned to fall back to the eastern juncture of the path and the high trail and catch the Immortals in the rear. If so, they were vanquished by the Immortals.

With the sunrise of the third day of battle, Leonidas watched his faithful Spartan bodyguards eat their morning meal and comb their hair. "Have a good breakfast, men, for we dine in Hades," he told them. They donned their fierce Corinthian helmets and strapped on their great shields. For the last time they followed their king to Thermopylae's western narrows.

In the valley below, Xerxes poured a libation to Ahura Mazda. Once more his soldiers hiked up to the defile, heartened by the hope that soon the Immortals would fall on the rear of their obstinate enemy.

As Leonidas watched them approach, the prophecy of Delphi ran through his mind.

"Either your glorious town shall be sacked by the Children of Perseus

Or, in exchange, must all through the whole Laconian country

Mourn for the loss of a king, descendant of great Heracles."

He now understood that he was that king. But he and his warriors would go out in a blaze of glory! Leonidas marched his men out of the defile to take the fight to the enemy.

There rang the clamor of crashing spears, the shredding of shields, the cries of battle, and the crying of the wounded. Heedless of their own lives, the Spartans ploughed into the Persian masses, driving many into the sea where they drowned beneath the waves. Their spears shattered, the Spartans drew short, inward-curved, cleaver-like blades and hewed into their foes.

Two brothers of Xerxes fell that morning. Leonidas, too, perished after taking a bloody toll on his foes. A battle of Homeric proportions raged over his body. Four times the two sides pressed each other back and forth. When at last the Spartans recovered Leonidas's body, a shout broke out to the rear ... here come the Immortals! Forthwith the Spartans fought their way back into the defile and behind the wall. Upon a hillock they joined the Thespians and prepared for the end.

The Thebans, on the other hand, so Herodotus tells us, threw their arms aside and came forward with their hands outstretched in surrender. Although some were killed in the heat of the moment, the majority were taken prisoner and branded with Xerxes' mark as a sign of distinction. Historians, however, have pondered if the Thebans' act of cowardice is justified, a result of Herodotus's pro-Athenian (Athenians being tra-

ditionally anti-Theban) leanings or of Thebes' subsequent submission to Persia.

Xerxes' men pressed forward, demolishing part of the wall. Joined by the Immortals, the Persian juggernaut flung itself at the last bastion of the sons of Hellas. Their weapons shattered, the Greeks fought on with hands and teeth. Even in their death throes, they were as dangerous as wounded lions.

At last the Persians called back their men and formed up ranks upon ranks of archers. One Spartan named Dienekes replied to the remark that the Persian arrows would darken the sun, "So much the better; we shall fight in the shade." Volley after volley showered upon the Greeks, the sharp arrowheads puncturing ragged armor and shields. With each volley, hoplites watched as beside them a comrade succumbed to the enemy's fire. Wooden dog tags hung around the Spartans' necks, but soon there was no one left who would care to read them. The Spartans did not flinch, nor cower in fear, but stood proud until all were slain. The lighter armed helot hoplites perished beside their masters, as did the Thespians, for whom it meant the loss of virtually the entire male population of their city.

On the same day, the bronze rams of Persian and Greek triremes collided in the battle of Artemisium. The battle was out on the open sea and losses were heavy on both sides. Although the Persians had the better of it, nothing decisive was achieved. In any case, with the fall of Thermopylae the Greeks pulled their fleet back to Athens.

By midday, it was all over, and Xerxes himself came to the battlefield. He ordered the Persian dead to be buried; there was no need for the rest of his army to know how much Persian blood was spilled for so few Greeks. Days later Xerxes' army finally marched past the hillock, leered at by Leonidas's head. It had been struck off his body and mounted on a stake. In the end, even the descendants of Heracles and the sons of Sparta could not defy the Persian titan.

The dramatic last stand of Leonidas's Spartans became the Greek personification of doomed heroism against impossible odds. Afterward, a column was erected at Sparta, inscribed with the names of Leonidas and his 300 Spartans plus Dienekes' scornful comment in the hour of certain death. Upon the fateful hillock at Thermopylae, the keepers of Demeter's shrine erected a stone lion. Inscribed upon it were the words, "Go, stranger, and to Lacedaemon tell, That here, obeying her behests, we fell."

Xerxes' had won the first round but Greece was not conquered yet. There would be other battles on land and at sea, battles during which the memory of the heroes of Thermopylae would inspire all of Greece. ■

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Windows



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